



A
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STARBURST

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS
THE MAKING OF A FANTASY EPIC

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS SPECIAL EDITION
INSIDE THE MOTHER SHIP - FIRST COLOUR PICTURES

JOHN CARPENTER'S 'THE FOG'
FULL REVIEW PLUS COLOUR PHOTOS

STARBURST FANTASY AWARDS
RESULTS, CONVENTION REPORTS AND EXCLUSIVE PICTURES

PLUS
REVIEWS OF VIRUS, MONSTER, THE CHANGELING,
INFERNO, THE SILENT SCREAM, HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALONE

MONSTER

BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS

BONUS CHRISTMAS
FANTASY FILM QUIZ



THE FOG

A SCENE FROM THE NEW JOHN CARPENTER HORROR FILM. SEE PAGE 24.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

A SPECIAL REPORT THAT TAKES YOU INSIDE THE MOTHER SHIP AND REVEALS JUST HOW DIFFERENT THE SPECIAL EDITION IS FROM THE ORIGINAL. SEE PAGE 28.



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WE REPORT ON THE MAKING OF NEW SPACE EPIC FROM ROGER CORMAN, PRODUCER OF THE 1950s SERIES OF POE HORROR MOVIES STARRING VINCENT PRICE. SEE PAGE 51.

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STARBURST

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A SPECIAL PREVIEW OF THE SPACE EPIC FROM ROGER CORMAN THAT IS DOING BRISK BUSINESS IN AMERICA.

STARBURST LETTERS

MAT STRIKES BACK

A critic or reviewer doesn't half have to be careful! With regard to my last *Record World* (Starburst 25), I did Jerry Goldsmith a slight disservice by not mentioning some of his previous film contributions. However I consider that really I only missed one, (for I intended the piece to be taken in the film soundtrack recording sense only) Logan's Run. Yes I know *The Boys from Brazil* was issued as a record, but unlike A.J. Meedows (Starburst 27) I do not consider it sf, perhaps I should. Incidentally one should really add *The Man from UNCLE* to the Goldsmith collection as the extended tv stories that were issued as features fall under the same type of generic heading as some of the other films mentioned.

Actually I would be interested to know if soundtracks of *Planet of the Apes* and *Capricorn 1* were in fact issued. Sometimes these recordings are not very well distributed or publicised and can easily be missed. I only got hold of the *Silent Running* soundtrack by chance (the original not the re-issued disc) and this was by having to order it.

I'm now going to hide behind Brosnan!

Mat Irvine,
Potters Bar,
Herts.

PRO AND CON CONVENTION

I'd just like to thank Marvel for a wonderful weekend at this year's Marvel Comics Film & Fantasy Convention 1980. The programme of events couldn't fail to entertain even the most demanding fans. I especially enjoyed seeing some of the classic sf and fantasy films shown in the cinema, the highlight of which was, for me, the Harryhausen double bill. Greet to see his vintage films and then meet the man in person next day at the con!

The amount of top stars who gave talks over the two days of the convention also came as a pleasant surprise to me. There was Carolina Munro, the First Lady of Fantasy herself, along with her husband who was "booed" by the audience. Well, you can't blame us for being jealous! Dene Gillespie, also gave a fascinating and witty talk, with Tony Crawley in the chair. Also on hand to entertain the fans with lectures on their careers were Ingrid Pitt minus fangs, Ray Harryhausen, Met Irvine and the charming Barry Morse, to name but a few.

The weekend culminated in the Starburst Awards Ceremony. I was delighted that *Blaka's 7*, *Empire* and *Alien* did very well. The ceremony was presented by Caroline Munro and Paul (Avon) Derrow. On hand to collect the awards were fantasy celebrities like Dave Prowse, Peter Mayhew and Brian Johnson. And at the end of all of us fans got the chance to meet the stars and get their autographs!

The con was organised by the Starburst team and it was a pleasure to meet them all and thank them for a great mag. Even John Brosnan was there, braving the wrath of all the angry readers of his reviews. Actually, he seemed to be a rather mild-mannered sort of bloke. Hard to believe he was the same man who had massacred some of the best science fiction films of recent years!

Lastly, to all the Starburst readers who didn't attend the con, now you know what you missed. Don't make the same mistake next year!

Paul Maledon,
Manchester 13.

I am writing this letter to you concerning *The Marvel Comics Film, Fantasy & Comic Convention*. I would not like you to take this letter as being rude or sarcastic but as a letter pointing out your convention errors.

1. Surely a 200 seater cinema was a little small when you must have known over 1000 people were expected to attend.



2. There were several complaints about the lecture rooms. If you were sat more than two rows back, you could not hear what was being discussed.

3. There did not appear to be anywhere for one to sit down except the bar, restaurant or stairs. The lift was taken over with a notice proclaiming 'Staff only'. I feel sorry for some of the less mobile people attending who must have found the stairs a grueling task.

4. This convention seemed to be more commercial with the advent of the *Space Invaders* machines. The con in some ways, was a con.

On the other hand many of us, I'm sure, were glad to see that a convention was being held. However, someone I spoke to said that time had been short. Surely in that case it would have been better to have just held a comic con and left the fantasy film convention alone until it could be better organised. I attended both cons

held at the Bloomsbury Centre, which were superior in many ways and must state that Mr Mike Conroy did keep things running relatively smoothly. There also seemed to be more atmosphere at the Bloomsbury, and not at the Horticultural Hall.

One accepts that some things go wrong. Projectors often have a will of their own and films always snap at the best bits. I am not concerned with those faults which can be forgiven.

I feel quite sorry for the guest speakers who must have felt something close to despair when people left their talk long before it was over.

However, enough is enough. I have moaned enough and hope if Marvel Comics organise next years I hope they will have learnt by their errors.

J.C. Aldridge (Miss),
Hucclecote,
Gloucester.

All of which just goes to show that you can't please all of the people all of the time. Though we extend our thanks to Paul for his kind words, we do, in essence, agree with Miss Aldridge. To take her points one by one...

1. Agreed, the cinema could have been larger. We'll know next time!

2. Again, point taken, microphones were called for, but that can be rectified in the future.

3. There never is anywhere to sit down at any conventions we've been to, other than the bar and restaurant areas, but we'll take the point into consideration — and the lift was set aside for staff use mainly because there were those abusing the service early in the proceedings.

4. The Space Invaders were a money making idea, we admit. The Young Variety Club charity did quite well out of the machines and are that much nearer the purchase of a baby care unit for the West London Hospital. But we don't think you really mind that kind of commercialism.

Aside from that, we think we have learned from the mistakes made. With all due respect to Mike Conroy, a friend of many years standing, the smaller the Convention the easier it is to organise. But we've already had some discussions with Mike about the next Convention... and we'll keep you posted.

THONGOR REVISITED

Just a couple of notes to the Thongor article in issue 26 of Starburst. The line drawings which appeared in the article were taken from a presentation portfolio prepared by Milton Subotsky. The illustrations were executed by an independent advertising agency and not, as perhaps the text and captions inferred, drawn by John Bolton. Apologies for any misconceptions which occurred.

The photograph at the top of page 17 is of Harley Cokiss, not myself which has been suggested.

Regarding my article on The Shining, I would like it to be known that it was written from

advance information, not from a viewing of the film. The fact that the film has had approximately 28 minutes cut from its original running time was not made known prior to its release and would seem to be a point that critics in the national press are also not aware of.

As for the Ray Harryhausen article in issue 27 it should be noted that Sinbad on Mars is shelved temporarily and there are no plans to produce the film in the foreseeable future, according to an article in *Cinefantastique* magazine.

Finally, various people assisted in the collation of information and pictures for this article and I would like to take the opportunity to thank them. They are Alan Jones, Barbara De Lord and Derek Treherne.

Phil Edwards,
London W14.

DOC SAVAGE— COMIC HERO?

Re your edition of Starburst 26 and the article on comic heroes transferred to the screen.

WHAT ABOUT DOC SAVAGE?

Yes! What about Doc Savage, the Man of Bronze.

Or perhaps the intellectually lofty Mr Murdoch thought that the "camp", but enjoyable, movie did not deserve to be included in his article.

I saw the film when it was shown recently on BBC tv and, after seeing it several times since, I am of the opinion that, although it treads a camp path, it is a tremendously enjoyable, uplifting and strangely compelling piece of entertainment.

I would appreciate either a solo article on the film or an address where I may obtain more information on the movie.

Paul Mitchell,
Redcar,
Cleveland.

Alan Murdoch replies — "Intellectually lofty? Let me say that you are right in your assumption, Paul, that the film did not deserve to be included in the article. But the reason for such a decision was not that I thought the film "camp but enjoyable" (actually, I thought it was camp and awful!) but because Doc Savage was not a comics hero. His first adventures appeared in his own monthly text magazine, Doc Savage in 1933, five years before the first appear-

ance of Superman. His exploits were adapted to the comic strip medium by Marvel Comics, but then DC Comics adopted the Shadow in much the same way and I didn't include him in the article, either.

I'd love to do a feature on the characters like the Shadow and Doc Savage that made it into the movies as I am a great fan of the pulp stories of the 1930s. Maybe our esteemed editor will ask me some day..."

THE LADIES

As an American visitor to Britain, faced with a long stay, I hope I will see your fine magazine featuring, in the near future, two of your most interesting and exotic actresses, Dena Gillespie and Jenny Runacre.

These ladies (who could, given equal exposure, scare the life out of most American movie queens) have had connections with sf/fantasy movies.

One of Ms Gillespie's first roles was in *The Lost Continent* end, more recently, she had a leading part in *The People that Time Forgot*. Ms Runacre had a big part in *The Final Programme* (1973) and then later starred in *Jubilee*.

I'm hoping that someday a British producer will bring a private fantasy of mine to life and put these ladies in the same movie! It's probably too much to hope that you will feature them in the same issue of Starburst, but I trust you will get around to featuring them both sometime.

Richard S. Brunner,
Canterbury,
Kent.



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THINGS TO COME

QUICK TRIP

Will Tobe Hooper ever make another feature film? Hardly looks that way. When still flushad with the tasteless triumph of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, Hooper was signed up for *The Dark*, a grisly urban occult chiller starring William Devane. Hooper began shooting, then quit and Bud Cerdos completed the film. Now, it's happened all over again — in London. Hooper has upped and left his debut British project, *Venom*, after a couple of weeks shooting. Piers Haggard, Starburst Award-winner for *The Quatermass Conclusion* (see page 32) is now finishing off the film at Elstree studios (just as he took over Peter Sellers' final film, *The Fiendish Plot of Fu Manchu*, after several directorial changes in Paris last year).

Therefore, all that Tobe Hooper has managed to finish since *Chainsaw* is the US-TV mini series of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* currently hitting Euro-cinemas in a shorn-down movie version.

Apart from the usual rumours, there has been no official reason given for Hooper's departure from Elstree. Might be that the guy just didn't dig snakes. Because snakes is mainly what the 5.5-million dollar chiller is all about. Black mambas, to be precise. "The most poisonous . . . most frightening snake in the world," according to the film's salesman, Mark Damon. "They have them on the set and they're not de-fanged. If you da-feng them or try to remove their venom, they die. What is frightening is the way they attack. If you're alone in a room, you can't run fast enough to get away. They rear up and are right at you."

Well, obviously Hooper knew all about that before accepting the film (and there was a snake fellow from the London Zoo on the set all the time with the mambas, anyway). Then,



Piers Haggard receives his Starburst Award at the Marvel Convention for Best Director on *Quatermass*.

again Hooper knew that *The Dark* was set in Los Angeles — and that proved the reason he quit the project. According to actor Billy Devane, Hooper is just a country boy at heart — and can't stand towns or big cities. He'd better start learning. For Hollywood is supposed to be his next port of call — if he can cut it.

Whatever the true facts of the *Venom* case, Hooper has a new venture already. Celled *It's Night Time*, it's financed by MGM from a scenario by Michael Greis, Mark Victor and the film's producer . . . a certain Steve Spielberg. Hooper's directing. Or he's supposed to. A case of Tobe . . . or not Tobe.

DOUBLE EXIT

As Piers Haggard took over the *Venom* reins, a new cinematographer also entered the scene. Gil Taylor, fresh from *Flash Gordon*. Exiting along with Hooper: Tony Richmond, Nic Roeg's usual cameraman. Producer Martin Bergman said that Richmond's exit had nothing to do with Hooper's going or Haggard's entry. "personal reasons" is the official excuse. That makes about as much sense as Hooper's "creative differences".

ROEG MOVIE

Ironically, like Hooper, Tony Richmond is heading direct to MGM for Nic Roeg's next movie, *Caribbean Murder Mystery*. Script is by Paul Mayersberg, who, of course, wrote *The Man Who Fell to Earth*. No casting news yet from their *Bad Timing* producer, Jeremy Thomas. Shouldn't be too difficult to work out. Which singer hasn't Roeg starred yet . . . ? Incidentally, Nic and Tony will find one welcome face among Leo the Lion's 1981 comeback in the realms of "more stars than there are in heaven" — the star-that-so-nearly-was of their *Flash Gordon*, Deborah Harry. She's making *An American Rhapsody* for ex-Altman Alan Rudolph.

LION'S SHARE

In fact, it's just about *all* happening back on the old Metro lot these days in Culver City as Metro swoop back into big-time filming again. And with a whole bunch of our friends . . .

Time After Time's creator, Nicholas Meyer is directing his newest script there, *The Frame Up* . . . *Close Encounters* co-producer Julia Phillips has a bunch announced including Michael Caine's treatment of *Ghost Town* . . . Dan O'Bannon will direct his *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, co-written with Dan Jakoby . . . Bo Derek has finally found her Tarzan, *The Ape Man* in the 1973 *Sinbad*, not to mention *Barbarella*'s angel Pygar and 1968's *Diabolik* . . . you've got it, John Phillip Law . . . and best news of all . . .



Nicholas Meyer directs *Time After Time*.

DOUG FLIES AGAIN

. . . Oh yes, even better than O'Bannon getting his director spurs — and Bo Derek playing Jana — is the flash that Doug Trumbull finally wins his second outing as a director. *Eight* years after making *Silent Running*, he's shooting Richard Danus and John Varley's screenplay called . . . *Millenium*. And that's not, I'm sure, the old, very old, Roger Corman script. Whatever it is, I very much like the sound of it and trust that our new man in Film City, Bill Werren, will be filling us in on it very soon.



Doug Trumbull on the set of *Silent Running*.

ALPHA TREATS

Okay, now let's get chauvinistic about a British outfit looking after our interests . . . Stanley Long's Alpha Films may have lost out on David Cronenberg after *Rabid* and *The Brood*, now that Cronenberg's gone to the big-time outfits. But Stan still knows a goody when he spots one. Or two. His main '81 release will be Danny Harris' *Silent Scream*, co-starring our own, our very own Barbara Steele — plus America's recent No. 1 box-office champ, James Glickenhaus' ultra-violent exercise, *The Exterminator*, in which a Vietnam veteran comes home and burns up just about everyone and everything as Viet vets always seem to do . . . in the modern fantasy chillers.

AVCO AND CO

Apart from all the glad tidings suddenly emanating from MGM (though its publicity department should know by now that Nicolas Roeg has no "in" in his nemesis), another major Hollywood combine looking after all our interests is Avco Embassy. Now while it isn't the job of this column to start sounding like a film industry trade journal, it's rather difficult not to when such companies as MGM and Avco begin putting so many of our kind of eggs in their basket — and when they do so, they deserve some support. Even thanks, hmm?

Rather like MGM, Avco are suddenly back into production after a few lean years — and that's mainly thanks to John Carpenter and The Fog. Not forgetting their earlier American success with Don Coscarelli's *Phantasm*. Rich on such winner, Avco — thanks to its currently-inspired president, Bob Rahma — is putting its money where Bob's instincts are and either fully or co-producing such films as David Cronenberg's *Scanners*, Jamie Lee Curtis in *Prom Night* and, of course, John Carpenter's big newbie, *Escape from New York*.

But that's not all . . . Avco's world-wide releasing format for the new year goes some thing like this. January — *Scanners*. February — Jamie Lee rides again in her Australian movie, *Road Games*. March — *Fear No Evil*. April — Joe Dante's *The Howling* (see later story). July — Carpenter's *Escape*. August — *An Eye for an Eye*. October — Martin Rosen's *Plague Dogs*. And added in, somewhere along the line, is Mark Hamill meeting little derling Kristy McNichol on *The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia*, a C&W respite from *The Amityville Horror* team . . . the *Prom Night* team of writer Billy Gray and director Paul Lynch shooting *Humungus* . . . and Wes Craven making *The Swamp Thing* after he finished *Deadly Blessings* for another combining.

"Horror films," Bob Rahma admits, "are very popular now, and the successful ones almost have to be youth-oriented in their

appeal." (Get the message, Mr Kubrick?) "We have three coming up," adds Bob, "and I really don't want to see any more. I think you're slowly going to see a bottoming out in that market." But not, naturally, until the end of next year according to Rahma's release plans. His prophesied exit of the horror binge (which surely must be coming when you hear that Sean Cunningham has been asked to make something called *Friday the 14th*, no kidding!) is why Bob Rahma is busier of late seeking a co-production deal on his 11-million dollar plans for *Terry and the Pirates* . . . and has since come up with another action adventure hero, *Trelnor the Wanderer*.

BIGGER BUDGETS

Forget all that guff I've been writing of late, pointing out that the average Hollywood film budget these days is about 8-million dollars. That, my friends, was yesterday. The average has now shot up to 10-million dollars which is absolutely ridiculous. But that's inflation for you. It is, by any standards a terrifying figure — and puts films, indeed film-making itself, at great risk.

Such a budget figure — and that covers for the negative costs, for one print of a film only — means that any movie needs to make 16-million dollars before it even breaks even, let

alone makes a profit. You need to double the 10-million dollars figure to fully account for release prints, publicity, advertising and all the other things charged to a movie (distribution offices rents, rates, staff salaries, and much else besides that should never be charged to any film. . .) All of which means a film has to really pull in around 40-million dollars to make any reasonable profit on the original budgetary investment. And not that many movies reach that kind of target. Of 33 new American movies released in 1980, less than half pulled 40-million at the box-offices. Of course, tv and video sales help, but not even the tale-coffers are boundless.

In truth, 1980 started out as a pretty rotten year for the film business, but the industry recovered from the summer onwards mainly, of course, because of one film in particular. Up to September, for example, or if you prefer, for the first three-quarters of the year, 20th Century-Fox alone earned what it termed "net business" takes of 206-million dollars. Easily about half of that income derived from . . . no prizes for guessing, *The Empire Strikes Back*. George's movie has earned around 111-million dollars at last count. The mind, I tell you, boggles!

VINTAGE COLOUR

One way to reduce the cost of movies may be



The last word in SOFEMING TERROR is...

The poster art for *Evil Speak*.

EVIL SPEAK

Sappy Days. Clint Howard, younger brother of Happy Days' tv-star Ron switches images in his first starring film. No longer the good kid of the neighbourhood (an image close to Ron's), he becomes the put-upon jerk cadet of a military school, helpless against the taunts and tortures of his fellow teenage soldiers. Until, that is, he finds a secret cellar and all these books in Latin about summoning up the Devil. Well, we've seen that before. But all-American Kids of the '80s have computers to help them with ancient Latin writ and having pressed a button or two locked in tapes, and turned his computer to ell systems go, Clint Howard unleashes Satan him (it?) self — and all hell is literally let loose on the military academy. Eric Weston directs from Joseph Garofalo's flesh and blood show script.

THINGS TO COME

to re-release the classic oldies... in new and very colourful clothes. It's beginning already with a collection of the best of Laurel and Hardy. A Canadian company, Douglas Brothers Corp, have the rights to 75 of Stan and Ollie's 106 Hal Roach films and via a new Philadelphia-created computer process (film to video tape and back to film again), Alan Douglas is able to turn the old monochrome movies into colour. "And the colour definition is perfect," says Douglas. He aims to prove his point shortly, by releasing a "new" Laurel and Hardy film, *Dance of the Cuckoos*, a compilation of the comics' best scenes from various films, re-edited together into a linear story. Stan and Ollie today - Bogle tomorrow? Dr, say, the original Frankenstein... *Things to Come*... etc. Anything is possible.

MUPPET MILLIONS

While skirting round the area of films and money, thought you'd be pleased to know that our other pet producer in the business - Lucas, apart - has now made himself about 40-million dollars from his Muppets. Jim Henson's well-deserved haul (a drop in the ocean compared to the Lucas loot) stems more from Muppet merchandising than tv sales and the movies. Anybody wanting to merchandise my column... please?

CONNOR'S DEBUT

Strange are the reviews coming across the pond for Kevin Connor's Hollywood debut, *Motel Hell*. Many American critics aren't too sure if it's an Airplane-style horror-send-up or not - though certainly Kevin provides clues (and laughs) enough. So tell me what you think? The script, from Kevin's producers Robert and Steven-Charles Jaffe, has Rory Calhoun (stand up those who remember Rory - no, maybe not. You'd do better to remain seated at your age) playing the owner of an out-of-the-way motel famous for the sweetest meat in the neighbourhood. Not that too many of his clients get to taste it - "cos the meat is them. Plus victims of car crashes he neatly arranges on the highway. He buries his captives alive, up to their necks, until there's more room in his ovens. Oh yeah, Wolfman Jack is also in the movie. And Americans think it's straight!

On the other hand, the muddled critics might be like poor Robert Butler of the *Kansas City Star*, blasted Brokeback-style by his readers for calling Ellen Burstyn's new movie, *Resurrection*, "horribly disjointed." Bob got so much mail he went downtown to view the movie anew - and discovered his, or rather the projectionist's mistake. First time around, two reels of the film had been shown out of order!

He wrote another review, praising the acting but still refusing to go along with his angry readers and call Daniel Petrie's film - in which

Ellen Burstyn of *The Exorcist* fame, is something of a female Christ figure - any kind of masterpiece.

HOWLING

But then it's never easy to know if some fantasy films were intended to be funny or just tragically turn out that way. For instance, I've been chuckling of late over some of the secret scripts of Joe Dante's *Howling* - although I'm also given to understand that it's meant to be... what was it now...? ah yes, "frightening and sinister". The poster makes it look that way; and the big sales hype: *Imagine your worst fear a reality*. Oh really?

Now that the film, written in part by the esteemed John Sayles (like Joe of the very funny *Piranha* team), is being finally edited for its April global opening, some of the script has been slipping my way and... sorry fellas, I'm laughing. I mean to say, *Howling* is set in Patrick MacNee's colony for werewolves. You know, a kind of country club retreat or sanatorium for these poor people to go to and learn how to (hrrmph!) live with their problem come the full moon and all that. Now that to me is very Pythonesque. Joe Dante, however, is (or was?) shooting it straight "with as many transformations as possible... nails, noses and hair will grow and the cast change shape on camera." Well, I should think so, too, Joe. But if they grow on the likes of Kevin McCarthy, Slim Pickens and dear old John Cerradine, I may still laugh. Maybe...



The publicity artwork for *The Howling*.

BETTY BOOP



AMERICA'S FAVORITE SWEETHEART

One of the best old-time cartoon favourites (or indeed 'favorites') is coming back to movies - Max Fleischer's 1915 creation, Betty Boop. Writer-producer Dan Delton is behind the renaissance of 65-year-old Betty, with Dave Fleischer in charge of adding to Max's original animation work. Victoria D'Orazi supplies the Boopish voice, with comic Tom Smothers supplying Pudgy's.

LOOK OUT, WORLD

Now here's a real laugh riot on the way. Barry Humphries is threatening to make a movie about another of his zany Aussie characters after he finishes his bit in the new *Rocky Horror* movie. Barry's movie is: *Les Patterson Saves the World*. Barry will only make it though if and when he can get a certain Hollywood name to co-star with him. Doris Day, no less. Dame Edna would obviously approve.

TELE-SPACE

Meanwhile, you can now forget all about Arthur Clarke's less than imposing *Mysterious World* telenovela series from Yorkshire tv. That's passe, now. Auntie Beeb is coming along shortly with its socko, smash hit co-production with America's PBS, *Cosmos* - currently generating massive audiences in the States and making a genuine superster out of the show's creator, chief writer and presenter, Cornell University scientist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Dr Carl Sagan. A good-looking, very telegraphic guy, Sagan had already made a media name for himself by various appearances on Johnny Carson's *Tonight* show, giving neat, precise, off-

THINGS TO COME

the-cuff explanations about the mysteries of the heavens. "There is nothing," goes the Sagan philosophy, "about science that cannot be explained to the laymen."

He proves this and more so with *Cosmos*, shot over three years on 40 locales in a dozen lends at a price of 8.5 million dollars — one of the better BBC investments for some time. As *Time* magazine says, "Sagan sends out an exuberant message: science is not only vital for humanity's future well-being, but is rousing good fun as well." Or it is with Super Carl in charge of the seminar, using everything from a Viking Mers lander, H.G. Wells' movie *Time Machine*, his own *Spaceship of the Imagination* to carry us through some of the finest special effects and miniatures around, to explain the entire history of the Universe in 13 spell-binding weeks.

The show's affects (mainly from Universal's Hertford facility, plus the KCET LA partner of the PBC or Public Broadcasting Service — Sagan having dropped the original ideas and work from both *Star Wars*ien Rob Black, Jamie Short and *Closa Encounters*' Doug Trumbull) make anything seen from Lucas, Spielberg and *Star Trek* look like so much playground. Eet your heart out, James Burke.

CLARKE'S ISLAND

Family film-maker Robert Radnitz — he made *Sounder*, if you remember it — has broken away from his screen partnership with the Mettel toy firm and swiftly announced half a dozen movies or more. The only one that interests us is a version of Arthur C. Clarke's *Dolphin Island*. Ron Michaelson is already painting production shots to help Radnitz antica beckers.

KURTZ RESTS

Latest news of the next *Star Wars* chapter, *The Revenge of the Jedi*, is that producer Gary Kurtz is following George Lucas' lead and taking a respite... George is scripting the film — naturally, But Gary will be acting in a consultancy capacity only. The film's producer will be Howard Kazanjian.

And no, the director will not be Steven Spielberg. Not on the next chapter, anyway. Maybe later.

LIFE OF BRIAN

He may have had to wait a couple of years, but Brian De Palma has finally got John Travolta back in his camp — and I use the word advisedly after the mendacious *Dressed to Kill*. When visiting London with *The Fury* De Palma told me his next project would be a straight cop thriller about a crooked cop, called *Prince of the City* — to star Sir Dancelot himself. Paul Schrader was telling me much the same about



Director Brian De Palma.

his American *Gigolo* plans. Miffed at the critical blasting of *Moment by Moment*, Travolta sidestepped both projects and took himself off on a long hiatus end discovered *Scientology*. Richard Gere became the *Gigolo* and De Palma dropped his *Prince* — since picked up by Sidney Lumet for *Treat Williams* of 1941 ill-fame.

Now that he has strutted, and proved, his stuff anew as James Bridges' *Urban Cowboy*, Travolta is tackling filming with a revitalised energy — and is currently shooting De Palma's newie, *Blow Out* (ex-*Personal Effects*) in Philadelphia of all places. So it must be a cracking script. Philly is not the most favourite town in America. It's the place often offering a week's vacation as first prize in competitions — second prize is two weeks. Travolta, of course, made his screen debut in De Palma's *Carnie*... not that you need me to remind you of that fact. On most replays of the film, the local newspaper ads forget Sissy Spacack and give top (or indeed solo) billing to Travolta.

AWARD NIGHT

Yet another interesting US tv series could be a package being offered by American Television Syndication — the complete 7th annual *Science Fiction Fantasy and Horror Film Awards* as staged in Hollywood in the summer. Merik Hamill hosts the show and the various guest stars and trophy presenters include both the 1938 end 1980 version of *Flash Gordon* — Buster Crabbe and Sam J. Jones. Plus Peter Fonda, Bond babe Maud Adams, funny *Dracula* George Hamilton, Tippi (The Birds) Hedren, Erin Gray from tv's *Buck Rogers* and uncle Roger Corman an' all...

Co-producer of the actual event and the tv-production, of course, was Caroline Munro's husband, Judd Hamilton. So, there could be hope for us to get the *Starburst Awards* ceremony — and all you fans — on television yet! After all, whatever went wrong with our big weekend, one has to remember, from little acorns, oak-trees grow.



Producer Judd Hamilton

QUICK TAKES

Australian lady Cassandra Harris joined the James Bond circus in *Corfu For Your Eyes Only* — hardly surprising considering the vast impression down-under movies currently making in the world... I expect the next 007 (whatever it is and whoever he'll be) will go down-under for locations... *Omen* producer Harvey Bernhard joining forces with *Meteor*'s Gabe Katzka for a chiller-diller called *The Beast Within* — which sounds like true soul music... Johnny Hough, finally over the troughs of Disney's *Watcher in the Woods* (or is he?), is helming John Cassavetes, John Ireland and local gal Wendy Hughes in Canada's *Incubus*, from a neat Ray Russell yarn — But then every Ray Russell yarn is neat... Edward and Valerie Abraham are the couple entrusted with scripting six Stephen King tales into a twin-set of Milton Subotsky movies for 1981. *Tides?* *Fright Night* and *Terror By Daylight*.

THANKS

Finally, to all those Marvelites end *Starbust*ers I met at the event of the year in October, not forgetting those misguided hordes who wanted my illegible autograph in books, programmes and magazines (I didn't think I looked like Chris Reeve at all), and specially to those divine ladies Dana Gillespie and Caroline Munro who made my "talk-show" debut such fun — thanks a bunch. Not only for coming and making the premier Marvel event such a splendid success, give or take the odd moment of sheer paranoia, but also for all your kind words, comment and general chit-chat.

We'll do it again next year, right? Right!

Silent Scream

Review by John Brosnan



Rebecca Balding, as Scotty, is tied up by director Denny Harris for a scene in *The Silent Scream*.

Yet another one of those horror movies that simply consists of a group of people being murdered one-by-one. I've seen so many of these things recently — and there are lots more waiting in the wings — that it's beginning to seem no one makes any other kind of movie these days. It's not just their total reliance on violence to provide thrills but also their lack of originality and imagination that I find irritating and I think the growing number of these sort of movies is a grim reflection on the state of the horror genre.

The four potential victims in *The Silent Scream* are, of course, young though at least there is an even division of sexes, unlike *He Knows You're Alone* where they're all girls. They are four college students who, anxious for cheap accommodation, take rooms in a grim-looking house above a Los Angeles beach. It's obvious from the start that the

occupants of the house are far from normal — there's the teenage son called Mason (*Brad Reardon*, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Starburst book reviewer John Bowles) who looks so nervous and shifty he's painful to watch, and there's his mum, Mrs Engles (*Yvonne De Carlo*, who must be pretty desperate for work), who refuses to come out of her room. What's their Big Secret, you wonder? Surely it's not going to be the corny old "mad relative locked in the attic" number? Yes, I'm afraid it is...

It seems that years ago Mr Engles' daughter, Victoria (played by none other than the once "Queen of Horror" *Barbara Steele*, who must also be desperate for work nowadays) was jilted by her boyfriend and carved him up with a knife, along with his new girlfriend. After a spell in an asylum she's been kept locked upstairs ever since, except that now she's just happened to break her way

out to kill again...

It's all very boring and I actually found the token sub-plots more interesting — like, would the beautiful Scotty (played by the beautiful *Rebecca Balding* from *Soap*) come to her senses and realise that her lover, Jack (*Steve Doubet*), is an egotistical jerk with the brains of a sea anemone? And would fat Doris (*Juli Andelman*) come to terms with her weight problem and find true happiness? But these and other questions of equal importance are never resolved but simply disappear amid all the violence and sudden deaths. Task.

I got the impression that the script writers were also more interested in the four students and their relationships than they were in the loonies in the house — the early scenes involving the former are handled with a certain amount of sophistication and subtlety (helped by good performances from Balding and Andelman) but once the attention is switched to the Engles family it's as if the writers become just as bored with them and their unbelievable situation as the audience. The script certainly goes to pieces at this point and I loved the sequence where poor Mason, understandably confused to learn that his mad sister is actually his mad mother and that the dead father he worships was really his grandfather, asks Mrs Engles, who he thought was his mother but is really his grand mother (are you following all this?), why she told him all these lies. "Because I thought you needed something to believe in," she replies.

Rebecca Balding is about the only good reason to see this movie (I'd share a loony-filled house with her anytime) but if it's a choice between going to this and doing anything else, like washing your hair or the cat, I'd stick with the latter. ●

Silent Scream (1979)

Rebecca Balding (as Scotty Parker), Cameron Mitchell (Lieut McGiver), Avery Schreiber (Sgt Rusin), Barbara Steele (Victoria Engles), Steve Doubet (Jack), Brad Reardon (Mason Engles), Yvonne De Carlo (Mrs Engles), John Widdlock (Peter), Jack Stryker (Police Chief), Juli Andelman (Doris), Tina Taylor (Victoria at 16), Jason Zahler (Mason at 3), with Thelma Palish, Ina Gould, Joan Lemmo, Ernie Potvin, Virginia Rose, Rachel Bard.

Directed by Denny Harris, Produced and written by Jim and Ken Wheat and Wallace C. Bennett, Photography by Michael Murphy and David Shore, Second unit photography by Denny Harris, George Posedel, Edited by Edward Saller, Music by Roger Kallaway, Production design by Christopher Henry, Sound by Larry Goss, Robert Kundsden, Don MacDougall, Robert Glass, Special Effects by Steve Karkus, Stunts by Joe Pronto, Jania Epper, Still photos by Barbara Seiler, Executive producers, Joan and Denny Harris, Associate producer, Leslie Zuckerman, A Jim and Ken Wheat Production for American Cinema Releasing — and Alpha Films (UK).

Time: 82 mins

Cart: X

MONSTER



Roger Corman, who produced the Edgar Allen Poe series of movies starring Vincent Price, is still making horror films. Tony Crawley reviews the latest offering from Corman's New World Productions.

Some twenty-seven years ago, a former Stanford and Oxford University graduate, ex-US Navy teacher of would-be officers at Colorado University who then preferred life as a 20th Century-Fox messenger boy at 32 dollars a week, sold his first movie script, *The House in the Sea*, saw it made into something quickly re-titled *Highway Dragnet*, took the money, all 12,000 dollars of it and ran... into production for himself. In 1954 he produced the kind of great little exploitation classic he's been famous for ever since.

His name was Roger Corman, of course. The film was *The Monster from the Ocean Floor*.

And he's still at it.

Monster (aka *Humanoids from the Deep*) is very much 1954 Cormania revisited. In colour and with a bit of nudity. Otherwise, it's the mixture very much as before.

Oh sure, the budget is higher, probably much higher than the adept penny-pinching Corman would like it to have been. The director is a woman, which is also a switch, although like any other Corman director, Barbara Peters has had to put up with extra footage being put in to the film she thought she'd finished.

For all these and other cosmetics, *Monster* is still a new look, a lively re-tread of Roger's old *Monster from the Ocean Floor*.

Only more so... It's also Corman's deft way of showing non-genre folk, a certain John Frankenheimer in particular, just how to make the good old monster yarn. *Monster* is what *Prophecy* should have been all about. In scope. In thrills. In chills. And in humour.

The two tales are close enough, what with local Indians fighting against drastic changes in their environment and ecology, not so much chemically polluted

waters, but the erection of Vic Morrow's new can factory tucked, incongruously, along the remarkably pretty Californian coastline.

The result is much the same. The salmon is a trifle off. Dogs die. Holiday-makers disappear. In short, because of the big business baddy, something extremely nasty is stirring beneath the picture-postcard-like waters...

To be sure, this is not only the old *Monster from the Ocean Floor*, it is *the* monster from the ocean floor — none other than our old chum, *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*. With knobs on. And scales. And tails. And enlarged heads. And when you come right down to it, a few touches of the Allen about them. (Certainly about, how shall I put it, their climax...).

Oh yeah, there's more than one, you see. And busy little beavers they are too. Angry at the world and — here's a switch



Opposite: One of the blood-thirsty mutants from the ocean floor who star in *Monster*. Opposite Inset: Doug McClure as Jim Hill and Cindy Weintraub as his wife Carol. Top: A young swimmer falls victim to the merauding creatures. Above: Good Morning, Campers! A mutant gives some unsuspecting holidaymakers their early morning alarm call.

for the sex-starved '80s — hungry for women. In fact, women figure high in their terror campaign. It's as if the creature from the black lagoon has been away on a sex-education sabbatical and wants to, well... graduate.

Why, there's even one abject failure among their school. He, or should one say it, prefers to court/chase/seduce a guy rather than any of the bevy of starlet guffaws — when it's suddenly change-partners time.

It's a good half-hour before we see them and then it's sheer havoc. They choose their entrance well. It's carnival time in the locality. Everyone's having a swinging time dancing on the dock. You can imagine their surprise — and screams; loud enough to hide any audience's guffaws — when it's suddenly change-partners time.

Stars of the piece — which is so easy to knock, and yet so well carried off, particularly with the bad taste of *Prophecy*

still in one's consciousness — include our good, tried and trusted hero from the core of the earth and other people and lands that time forgot, Doug McClure; and as the inevitable scientist searching for the key to the moss-covered beasts, is gorgeous Ann Turkel, the one-time Mrs Richard Harris. Vic Morrow, as mentioned, is the villain, Anthony Penya leads the angry Indians and Denise Galick is a stand-out among the screaming wallpaper chorus line.

Good, old-fashioned rubbish then, with certain plaudits to director Barbara Peters, although just how many, or indeed what for exactly, one cannot be too sure, given, or so I'm told, a very large amount of extra sequences added to her final version. Presumably, these would be the scenes which tend to degrade womankind rather more than the feminist-conscious Hollywood Establishment dares to do these days. So, perhaps,

more of the plaudits should go to her, or Corman's choice of editor, Mark Goldblatt. The way he welds Barbara's and whoever's (James Sbardellati's?) footage together in a tight, taut 80 minutes, you can't see the joins. Well, not that many.

Rob Bottin designed the creatures — between some sets of tennis, I shouldn't wonder. Or maybe Corman didn't give him enough money for the job. (Maybe?)

Although, we've no firm news as yet of *Humanoids* opening in Britain, it has been playing well enough on the Continent, and once those grosses are digested, it should move over here fast enough — from United Artists which also released Corman's (funnier) *Piranha*.

The line producer of both, Martin B. Cohen, has already announced sequels to both features, by the way, as part of the 36-million dollar reactivation of his Barunch Productions shop in Los Angeles. Ann Turkel is talking turkey about starring again, and both *Piranha II* and *Monster II* will cost a mere 1.5 million dollars each. Cohen is lavishing rather more, up to 5-million in fact, for *Sherlock Holmes & Dracula*, and another chiller, *Where Evil Dwells*. He's then into what sounds a sheer ego trip — *Two Gun Cohen*!

Martin Cohen would appear to be yet another of those busy apprentices who have learned the game at Roger Corman's knee. He's no John Sayles, but he's trying. ●

Monster (Humanoids from the Deep, 1980)

Doug McClure (as Jim Hill), Ann Turkel (Dr Susan Drake), Vic Morrow (Hank Slattery), Cindy Weintraub (Carol Hill), Anthony Penya (Johnny Eagle), Denise Galick (Linda Beale), Lynn Thiel (Peggy Larsen), Meegan King (Jerry Potter), Breck Costin (Tom Hill), Hoke Howell (Deke), Don Maxwell (Dick), David Strassman (Billy), with Greg Trevis, Linda Shayne, Lisa Glaser, Bruce Monette, Shawn Erler, Frank Arnold, Amy Barrett and Jo Williams and the Whitewater Boys.

Directed by Barbara Peters, Script by Frederick James, based on a story by Frank Arnold and Martin B. Cohen, Photography by Daniele Lacambre, Music by James Horner, Art Director, Michael Erler, Sound, Mark Harris, Editor, Mark Goldblatt, Humanoids designed by Rob Bottin, Special Effects by Roger George, Stunts co-director, Jack Tyree, Stuntman Hills Farnsworth, Make-up by Maria Manalis, Special effects make-up by Ken Myers, Shawn McEnroe, Steve Johnson, Production Director, Thomas Mann, Assistant directors James Sbardellati, (second unit) Jan Wering, Produced by Martin B. Cohen and Hunt Lowry. Still photographs by Sharon Kirkpatrick.

An United Artists release of a Roger Corman production through New World Productions, 80 minutes, Metrocolor.



The latest offering from Dario Argento (pictured above left) sneaked out onto the cinema circuits with very little in the way of advertising or publicity. *Starburst* caught up with the film early in its release and found it to be a pallid re-working of *Suspiria*. Review by Phil Edwards.

With *Suspiria* being such a refreshing treat a couple of years ago, one was really expecting more from Dario Argento with *Inferno*.

The real problem with the film lies not with the technical execution of the piece, rather it rests with the story, or lack of it.

In many ways it was the sheer audacity of *Suspiria*'s flash, bang, wallop that carried the film's rather tiny witchcraft plot. However, we are now more accustomed to Argento's style and can take more notice of the mechanics of the story. Sad to say that the script is little more than a remake of *Suspiria* with the action moved from a dance school in the Black Forest to an eldritch apartment house in New York.

Even with these reservations regarding

INFERNO

Inferno is an exercise in style over content. One wonders, though, what Argento could do with a good script.

the originality of the story it should be said that *Inferno* has much to recommend it. Argento's camera weaves through the corridors and secret passages inevitably discovering something nasty at the end. As with *Suspiria* the various murders are suitably gory if not always making sense within the context of the plot.

Inferno was also the last film on which the master of the atmospheric Italian horror film, Mario Bava, worked. For *Inferno* Bava contributed some fine effects, most notably a sequence which takes place in the flooded basement of the cursed apartment house.

Inferno then is an exercise in style over content. On that score the film succeeds brilliantly. One wonders though, what Argento *could* do with a good script.



He Knows You're Alone

Review by Phil Edwards.

Just how much longer film makers can wring out the Halloween formula for such tired, derivative films as this must surely be in question. Yet again we have a knife-wielding psycho on the loose terrorising college girls, this time specialising in brides-to-be.

There is little motivation for the killer's actions, other than the fact that he was jilted in favour of a policeman, played numbly by Lewis Arit. Years have passed, the killer, uncaught, decides for whatever reason, to go on the rampage again. This gives the cop a second chance at catching him.

Once the scenario of the film is set and it becomes obvious that any tension is going to rest with the actual nastiness of the murders, it becomes much more entertaining to try to count the number of "swipes" from previous like-thrillers.

From *Halloween* there was the college girl banter and chatter. From *Psycho* there was the shower scene, minus its bloody denouement. That was saved for later with a severed head in a fish tank,

The fact that it is almost always women who are threatened, brutalised and murdered also brings into question the entertainment value of such exploitation films.

straight out of *The Silent Partner*. From *Halloween* again there was the killer who wouldn't stay dead, the killer atop the car and the smashing through the windscreen, the synthesiser score etc, etc. From *Carrie* the shock ending. Well, kind of – the whole thing had been so well telegraphed from the opening that the "shock" was nothing of the kind.

This film, like others before it, such as *Friday 13th*, *Prom Night*, *Maniac* and no doubt like those to come, *Motel Hell*, *Terror Train*, *Mother's Day*, etc are giving horror movies a bad name. Generally their entire value rests on the quality of the make-up effects and their suspense depends purely on scenes of impending brutality. The fact that it is almost always women who are threatened, brutalised and murdered also brings into question the entertainment value of such exploitation films.

He Knows You're Alone is a cheap thrill with the emphasis most definitely on the 'cheap'.



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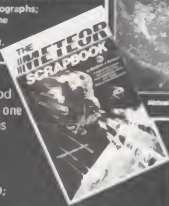
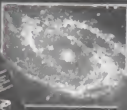
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NOTE: See our ad on page 43 this issue.

STARBURST

If you can manage to tear yourself away from all the great fantasy films showing on the television over the Christmas season, perhaps you can find time to try the *Starburst* Christmas Quiz on your family and friends.

The questions were compiled by our resident trivia expert, Alan Murdoch.

As always, the quiz is divided into three sections: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. The questions have been compiled from earlier issues of *Starburst* (plus a couple from thin air and a few from my own devious mind) so provided you have been following the magazine for long enough, you should accumulate a respectable score. The highest possible number of points available is 101. Best of luck!

ELEMENTARY

- Here are three quotes from three fantasy films. Name the actors speaking (1 point for each) and the films in which the lines were spoken. (another point for each)
 - "Synthetic flesh, synthetic flesh!"
 - "Listen to them. Children of the night. What music they make."
 - "Have some gin. It's my only weakness."
- Name the tv fantasy series that starred:
 - a robot policeman. (1 point)
 - a lady genie. (1 point)
 - a talking horse. (1 point)
- The *Outer Limits* producer Joseph Stefano is better known for his screenplay for which Hitchcock film? (1 point)
- And while on the subject of *The Outer Limits*, name two Harlan Ellison-penned episodes. (2 points)
- What was the name of the character played by Stanley Unwin in Gerry Anderson's *The Secret Service*? (1 point)
- In which film did...
 - a bone turn into a spaceship? (1 point)
 - the Thames dry up? (1 point)
 - a robot produce 60 gallons of genuine "Rocket" bourbon? (1 point)
- Which actor played the blind hermit in *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)? (1 point). And who played the lampoon version of the same character in *Young Frankenstein* (1974)? (1 point)



A. Name the tall chap (1 point) and the film in which he appeared (1 point)

- Give the titles of three Karloff/Lugosi team-up movies. (1 point for each)
- How many *Planet of the Apes* films have there been? (1 point) Name them. (1 point for each)
- What is the link between Chandu the Magician (1932), *Things to Come* (1936) and *Invaders from Mars* (1953)? (1 point)
- The credited director of *The Thing From Another World* (1951) was Christian Nyby, though many believe another director to be responsible. Name him (1 point)
- Who wrote the music for...
 - The Fury* (1978). (1 point)
 - The Omen* (1976). (1 point)
 - Psycho* (1960). (1 point)
- How many actors have portrayed Sinbad in the *Harryhausen* series? (1 point) List them (1 point for each)
- Which movie was billed as "the first space western"? (1 point)
- Who (or what) were *Them* (1954) (1 point) and where did they hide? (another point).



B. A scene from Hammer's *Curse of the Werewolf* (1961). Who plays the werewolf (1 point) and the lady he's strangling? (1 point). Why does this scene make no sense? (1 point)



C. Name this film (1 point)

16. Which film was the first to depict a man in space? (1 point) And can you say which was the first film to feature an alien visitor to Earth? (1 point)
17. In how many movies has Lon Chaney Jr played a Werewolf (1 point) List the films (1 point for each)

INTERMEDIATE

18. Contrary to popular belief Tony Randell played only five of the Seven Faces of Dr Lao (1966). Name the five characters. (1 point for each)
19. "A thousand predatory tons of man-eating beast — hungering for human prey — the deadliest monster of all time!" Which film sported this advertising copy (1 point)
20. Why are the following film titles inappropriate?
a) Abbot and Costello Go to Mars (1953) (1 point)
b) Son of Dracula (1943) (1 point)
c) The Black Cat (1934) (1 point)
21. Director Michael Anderson's most recent offering was The Martian Chronicles (1980) but can you list three other Anderson-directed fantasy movies? (1 point for each)



D. A famous scene from a famous film. But who is the actor? (1 point)

22. Name the original stories on which the following are based:

- a) Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) (1 point)
b) The Thing (From Another World) (1951) (1 point)
c) The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951) (1 point)

23. List three actors who have played the title role in the various film versions of Phantom of the Opera. (1 point for each)

24. Name three actors who have played the title roles in the various film versions of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1 point for each)



E. No prizes for recognising Boris Karloff. But can you name the film (1 point) and the other actor? (1 point)

ADVANCED

25. In which movie did Humphrey Bogart play a modern vampire? (1 point)
26. Name the celebrated cameraman who worked on Dracula (1931) and Murders in the Rue Morgue (1932). (1 point) Can you say which two fantasy films marked his only stab at directing? (1 point for each)
27. Bela Lugosi, Christopher Lee and Frank Langella are probably the best-known movie Draculas of all. But can you list three other actors who have played the character in films? (1 point for each)
28. Roald Dahl is well-known for hosting the Anglia tv series Tales of the Unexpected. But what was the title of another, earlier tv anthology series he hosted? (1 point)
29. Name the heroes of the following serials:
a) The Mysterious Dr Satan (1940) (1 point)
b) Radar Men from the Moon (1952) (1 point)
c) Flying G-Men (1939) (1 point)
30. On which planet was Ray Harryhausen's Ymir born? (1 point)



ANSWERS

0-20 Tsk. rk, rkl 21-40 Not good but not beyond hope. Recommend an immediate subscription to Starburst! 41-60 A respectable score for the average fan. 61-80 Good. You've been doing your homework. 81-100 Excellent! A Starburst mastermind. 101 Either you were cheating or your name is Alan Murdoch!

1. A. Lyster, Jason and the Argonauts (1963). 2. B. Oliver Reed, who died giving birth to her furry lady is the werewolf's mother who died giving birth to her furry son. 3. Cary, of the Triforce (1963). 4. Max Von Sydow, e. A. trick question! The film is House of Frankenstein (1944) so Boris Karloff is the victim in this scene and the Monster is played by Glenn Strange. 5. F. It is the Terror from Beyond Space (1958). 6. Doreia (1931). 7. (to right) Mina Seward, Count Dracula and Renfield; Hsian Chandler, Bela Lugosi and Dwight Frye. 8. Dr. Zachary Smith, known only as "the robot", Jondathon Harris, Bob May.

PICTURE QUIZ

25. The Return of Doctor X (1939). 26. Karl Freund, The Mummy (1932), Mad Love (1935). 27. Lon Chaney Jr., John Carradine, Francis Lederer, Jack Palance, George Hamilton. 28. Way Out (1961). 29. Copperhead, Commando Cody, The Black Falcon. 30. The Ymir hatched out of his egg on Earth!

ADVANCED

18 Doc. 100, Martin, Pan, Medusa and Apollonius of Tyana, 19. The
Deadly Minutes (1957). 20. (a) They go to Venus (b) The film actually
appears in a special version with this doesn't really count
19 Doc. 100, Martin, Pan, Medusa and Apollonius of Tyana, 19. The
Deadly Minutes (1957). 20. (a) They go to Venus (b) The film actually
appears in a special version with this doesn't really count

[illegible]

WHO WILL INHERIT THE EARTH?



Starburst reports on a new science fiction offering from Japan, aimed firmly at the international market, which succeeds on nearly all levels, in a special preview by Tony Crawley.

VIRUSS

The world has wiped itself out. Again.

The date is August, 1982. And Britain's nuclear attack submarine, Nereid, releases a flying probe from beneath the waves of

Tokyo Bay. The probe substantiates the terrible truth. Tokyo is undamaged. But all life is extinct. The killer virus has spread this far . . . The Nereid's skipper can only set

course for the one sanctuary left on his planet, Antarctica. And try to start civilisation all over again. With 855 men and eight women . . .

Take a mix of Ice Station Zebra and Bear Island, add in a dash (just a dash, mind you) of Meteor, a whiff or three of Dr Strangelove, meld together with varying actors and accents from Hollywood, Canada and Japan, and you have — in the roughest terms, admittedly — the makings of Japan's first real entry into international class science fiction.

Virus is no chopped-up kiddievision animation like the good ship Yamato. It's directed, after all, by Kinji Fukasaku. And it is a most considerable and creditable venture. Bigger in scope, and logistics, than anything out of Hollywood just lately. The shooting schedule alone covered almost two years — and most of the free world.

Shooting began in December 1978 in Antarctica of all far distant locations, and a full year before the film was cast. Some of the eventual star line-up — Bo Svenson, Olivia Hussey, Cecil Linder and Chuck Connors — stood shivering in their parkas when shooting started up again the following Antarctic "summer" in December, 1979.

In fact, the first news to reach the outside (Japanese) world that Virus was being made at all (expert, of course, from mentions in *Things To Come!*) was when one of the ships being used as a production headquarters for the unit, struck an uncharted rock and a nearby Soviet vessel answered its SOS call on December 24. (Ironically, in the film a Russian sub requests assistance in these virus-free waters and Chuck Connors, as befits tv's old Rifleman hero even if he is making heavy weather of playing an Englishman, blasts it clear out of the sea.) The Christmas celebrations planned beneath voluminous decorations aboard the 2,500-ton Ice-A Ship, *Linblad Explorer*, never did take place. Cast and crew were too busy being rescued and ferried to the mainland... in good time to welcome 1980.

Between his year — apert polar shoots, director Fukasaku roamed the globe with camera, stars (and/or stand-ins) for crucial sequences in London, Paris, Rome, Washington and Los Angeles. The final round of shooting took the unit to Canadian studios (where most of his star cast were gathered: Henry Silva, Robert Vaughn and Glenn Ford as the American President, before further location trips into Chile and Peru).

Beat that, George Lucas! Well, actually, he is. Virus is running second only to *The Empire Strikes Back* on the Japanese box-office hit parade. Producer Haruki Kadokawa is hardly surprised or upset by the opposition. Lucas, after all, is just one of the reasons this highly successful young publishing tycoon has gone into the movie game...

Virus, which was originally published (by Kadokawa, who also?) as *The Day of Resurrection* (a more apt, if less catchy title), is the latest work by Japan's leading exponent of science fiction, Sakyo Komatsu. A one-time radio scripter, getting through 12,000 pages of scripts in four years, he first tried his hand at it with *Peaca* on Earth in 1961. Such has remained his (very Japanese) message ever since in *The Japanese Apaches*, *At the End of the*



Above: A submarine cruises through the chill waters of Antarctica. Below: The Japanese crew cope with the sub-zero conditions as the cold threatens to freeze the cameras solid.



Endless River and his previously filmed book, *The Submersion of Japan*.

It was the triumph of this Toho film (four billion yen, yet!) which started publisher Kadokawa musing about making movies. He noticed, however that as big as *Submersion* was at home, it didn't create much of a stir abroad, and didn't exactly rescue the sliding Japanese film industry, either. Foreign movies win the reel box-office bullion. He next noted that the Emmanuelle producer, Yves Rousset-Rouard, was his age exactly (he's 38 now), and that the biggest Hollywood hits came from similarly young bloods: Coppola, Lucas, Spielberg and the like. It was, he decided, also necessary for Japan to start "employing the ruthless energy of the young".

He knew what he wanted to film — and on a grand scale in order to match the Americans. Komatsu's new book, of course. But the

publisher had no track record beyond his book coups. He started making smaller films, therefore, and given his publicity knowhow, his first four became immense (local) hits. With those under his belt, he felt ready to tackle the enormity of Virus.

There was, though, still one problem to face. The writer... Perhaps unimpressed with the *Submersion* film, Komatsu had toiled hard in making his new book as unfilmable as possible! To start with, the major setting was Antarctica, where no drama film unit had gone before. The rest of the tale was scattered around the world. "I had," said the writer, "deliberately aimed at creating the kind of awesome images through my use of the language, which defied reproduction into film. Furthermore, taking into consideration the present capacity of the Japanese film industry, I could not have guessed that it could possibly

because a project of the size and scale it is now."

Antarctica hardly put the producer off. Between publishing other authors, Kadokawa had penned his own books based on his Thor Hyderdal-like voyages — crossing the Japan sea in a wooden, hand-paddled boat; taking an ancient outrigger canoe, with sails, from the Philippines to Japan for *The Search of the Japanese Roots*. He thrived on such adventures.

While he didn't exactly paddle his own canoe to the South Pole, Kadokawa spent months of research on the problems of shooting there. He had meetings with the leading Japanese Polar explorer, Neomi Uemura. His advice was short, simple... and very expensive. Shooting could only be carried out during the Antarctic summer, which immediately meant a change of scheduling and forced the film into a two-year shooting period — not something that would delight most Hollywood film-makers. Particularly with about 15-million dollars at risk.

Before the sters, producer and director had to cast their camera. With location temperatures dropping way below zero, the equipment had to be selected with the utmost care. The Ariflex, highly resistant to cold, topped the list — as back-up in the situations where the Panavision cameras could not operate without heaters.

Next, the ill-fated *Linblad Explorer* was hired to accommodate cast and crew and the Chilean navy chipped with a submarine... and helicopters. Carried away by such largesse, perhaps, director Kukasaku shot almost 20,000 ft of film on his '78 trip. Enough for the next two *Star Wars* adventures! (Actually, it was worth it. Cameraman Daisaku Kimura surpasses the Arctic footage of *Bear Island* with unbelievable vistas of icy mountains changing from white to blue, purple and pink).

The story's pretty damned good, too, retaining much of the author's original intent — probing mankind's present existence through the portrayal of the resurrection of man, and, perhaps, of God. Ha uses the world as his canvas and a double disaster thriller as his action...

February, 1982, is the beginning of the end... as a deadly man-made virus is smuggled from an East German lab into Pentagon hands. The virus is lethal and dormant only in extreme cold. So all is well, at first, when the mystery courier's plane crashes in lonely, snowy wastes. Once the snows melt and the warm winds blow, a flu-like plague decimates the populace. Europe today — tomorrow, the world!

In Washington, President Glenn Ford, meets with his top brass. Henry Silva, as his Chief of Staff, offers a Strangelovian response to the catastrophe. He wants to activate the ARS automatic trigger system, designed to set off the country's nuclear retaliatory force if and when any Russian ICBMs strike United States soil. Senator Robert Vaughn, however, exposes the real truth of the situation. The virus is part of the Pentagon's new line in warfare, and Silva has committed its inventor (*Stuart Gillard*) into a mental hospital to keep him quiet.

The President sacks Silva and initiates a



Above: The lonely figure of Yoshizumi (Masao Kusakeri) stands on a Chilean shore. Inset: The advertising artwork for the film.

crash programme to find an antidote. Too late! In his dying message to mankind, President Ford admits America's part in the global disaster and contacts a wintering scientific settlement in Antarctica — and hands over the world to them, rather like the top prize in a US tv game show. They alone can survive the viral plague if they stay put. And Ford hopes they do a better job with their new world than he did with the old.

As his last testament ends, the dying President is powerless to top the med Silva getting his way and activating the ARS system...

As well as all this high powered stuff, we meet sundry other characters fighting the virus the best they can. A nurse in Japan, for example, played by the extremely fetching and

well-named Yumi Tekigawa, faces her end in triple-hendkerchief fashion with a young moppet she finds among the dead. She is married, so it turns out, to one of the film's heroes — Masao Kusakeri, down there in Antarctica. He can't save her, but it's not long before he and Bo Svenson are trying to save what's left of the world... with time out for Masao to fell for Juliet-thet-was, Olivia Hussey.

The Antarctic group is joined by the Brits from the *Nerid*. They debate their future. There's 855 men in all. And just eight women. A delicate problem has to be faced if the world is to begin anew. If, of course, there's time... An earthquake is predicted for Washington — and this could trigger off Silva's ARS. Russia's system is also set and their missiles are aimed



Above: Captain McCloud (Chuck Connors), Major Carter (Bo Svenson) and Yoshizumi (Masao Kusakari) discuss their plans to deactivate the American nuclear defence system. Below: A confrontation between Senator Berkley (Robert Vaughan), Garland (Henry Silva) and President Richardson (Glenn Ford).



et Antarctica's survivors, as well. And so Svenson and Kusakari, equipped with an anti-virus vaccine, leave in the *Neroid* to try to deactivate the system.

Too late — part two ... By the time they hit Washington's streets, the first tremors begin. Svenson is killed and Kusakari ducks into a underground shelter as two empty nations begin blasting computerised hell out of each other, creating a wasteland of most of the Earth. (But still, as Kusakari reports by radio, the vaccine seemed to work. Big deal!)

A good enough time, perhaps, for the film to end. On a bang not a whimper. But no. It goes on. An on. Far too long at 150 minutes, though I gather the "work in progress" version screened at the Cannes festival has now been

considerably trimmed. And guess what? Our Japanese hero actually survives the apocalypse, which is stretching credibility almost as far as having Chuck Connors and George Kennedy in the Royal Navy ... and emerging from his shelter, he begins walking home to Antarctica, or the Southernmost tip of Chile, at least. The lends he traverses are sheer deserts. But there in Chile he finds his companions, shipwrecked by now, and with little will to live, until the bearded, shaggy figure of Kusakari stumbles from the top of a glacier into Olivie Hussey's arms. He is more dead than alive ... and although no one seems to mention it, surely contaminated by all the radioactive fallout he's been strolling through ...

Whether publisher-turned-producer Haruki

Kodokawa can fulfill his dream and make this the first internationally-minded Japanese film to conquer world cinemas since Kurosawa's more perochial classics, is yet to be determined. The fact that America is the big villain of the piece and the hero is Japanese seems rather more designed with his home market in mind than Dallas, Marseille or Bridlington. *Virus* is, though, a leudable enterprise.

Kadokawa admits he couldn't have made the film without help from Hollywood and Canada — his consultant for the miniatures, by the way, is Gregory Jain from the *Dark Star* and *CE3K* teams. The dominant factor in getting the film made at all remains that "ruthless energy" of the Japanese crew. The Canadians nicknamed them *The Kemikaze* because of their ceaseless dedication and tireless energy. Where did they get it from? They replied in their boss' favourite expression: "For the love of the movies".

Heading the team, naturally, is the director, 50-year-old Kinji Kukasaki, who has more or less succeeded Kurosawa as Japan's most influential director since his 1961 debut. "*Virus*" says he, "is like a jigsaw puzzle. People from various nations and many different episodes are enmeshed in a complete structure — an immense portrait of mankind. Many people felt the film should be further simplified, as is the current fashion in science fiction. But I was adamant in making the movie in the manner we had originally planned for it. Unless we used this approach, jumping about from place to place, we could not have achieved this magnificent drama about where men is headed. Due to advanced communication methods, the world is certainly becoming smaller. The walls surrounded each nation are still solid and thick, crippling the future of mankind itself. And so our film, a rash venture some thought, poses the query: Will men ever be able to break down these walls with his own hands?"

Considering the various nationalities — end countries — utilised in the film, *Virus* certainly breeched those walls, both explosively and artistically. It's a start. ●

Virus (1980)

Sonny Chiba (as *Dr Yamauchi*), Chuck Connors (*Capt. McCloud*), Stephanie Faulkner (*Sarah*), Glenn Ford (*President Richardson*), Stuart Gillard (*Dr Mayer*), Olivia Hussey (*Marit*), George Kennedy (*Admiral Conway*), Masao Kusakari (*Yoshizumi*), Cecil Linder (*Dr Latour*), Isao Natsuki (*Dr Nakanishi*), Ken Ogata (*Prof Tsuchiya*), Edward J. Olmos (*Capt Lopez*), Henry Silva (*Garland*), Bo Svenson (*Major Carter*), Yumi Takigawa (*Noriko*), Robert Vaughan (*Sen Barkley*).

Directed by Kinji Kukasaki, Script by Koji Takada, Gregory Kanpp, Kinji Fukasaku, from the novel by Sakyō Komatsu, Photography by Daiaku Kimura, Music by Teo Macero, Theme song by Janis Ian, Special Miniature Consultant Gregory Jain, Matte Paintings by Mike Minor, Produced by Haruki Kadokawa, Poster artist: Noriyoshi Ohrai.

A co-production of Haruki Kadokawa Films and the Tokyo Broadcasting System.

JOHN CARPENTER'S THE FOG



Review by John Brosnan

Halfway through the screening of *The Fog* a door opened near where I was sitting at the end of the front row and suddenly a shambling, shaggy figure was lurching towards me. As the movie itself was full of shambling figures lurching at people through doorways I jumped several inches out of my seat but it was only fellow Starburst contributor Phil Edwards tripping on the steps as he returned from answering a call

Like Carpenter's previous offering *Halloween*, *The Fog* sets out to be nothing more than a straight-forward chiller with the emphasis on the shocks.

of nature (many is the time I've fallen down those same steps in that particular preview theatre — someone must polish them up before every screening).

My nervous, jumpy state was a testament to the effectiveness of John Carpenter's skill in creating an atmosphere of suspense (nor was I alone in this — the lady from Film '80 who was sitting on my left spent much of the movie

hiding behind her copy of the synopsis). Like Carpenter's previous offering *Halloween*, *The Fog* sets out to be nothing more than a straight-forward chiller with the emphasis on the shocks rather than the characters or the story and on that level succeeds perfectly, with the exception of the ending which is something of a let-down.

The "things-that-go-bump-in-the-night" tone of the film is established in a short prologue which has an old sea-dog (*John Houseman*) telling a group of children around a camp fire a ghost story. It's the story of how, 100 years ago, a ship called the "Elizabeth Dane" was deliberately led onto the shoals just off Antonio Bay by a false beacon fire set by a number of local people who were after the gold it carried. There is now a legend, the old man tells them, that on the centenary of that event, which happens the very next day, the murdered mariners will rise up from the sea and come to Antonio Bay to claim their revenge...

Well, no sooner does the clock strike midnight than strange things start happening in the town. In scenes reminiscent of *Close Encounters* various

electrical gadgets switch themselves on while bottles and other glass objects mysteriously explode. Meanwhile, out at sea, a strange fog materialises and envelops a drifting trawler on which three locals are having a drinking party. They sober up quickly when an old three-masted schooner suddenly looms up alongside their boat but by then it's too late and they become the first victims.

Back on shore the local priest (Hal

The local priest (Hal Holbrook), alone in his church, is startled when a section of stone slab falls from the wall on his study.

Holbrook), alone in his church, is startled when a section of stone slab falls from the wall of his study to reveal an old journal hidden behind it. The book contains the story of how the six founders of Antonio Bay deliberately wrecked the "Elizabeth Dane" because its captain intended setting up a leper colony in the area. Then, with the gold they salvaged from the wreck they were able



*Above left: John Carpenter discusses a scene with his wife, actress Adrienne Barbeau, who plays Stevie Wayne in **The Fog**. Above right: The ghostly schooner materialises out of the mists. Below: Elizabeth Solley (Jamie Leigh Curtis) and Nick Castle (Tommy Atkins) are trapped in their truck by the fog.*

to turn Antonio Bay into a flourishing town. The priest learns that not only will the dead lepers return to avenge themselves on the six descendants of the original six murderers but also to claim their gold...

The eerie happenings of the first night are only prelude for what happens on the following night — the fog returns and sweeps right through the town bringing with it the rather solid ghosts of the leprous sailors and trapping various groups of people as well as disc-jockey Stevie Wayne (Adrienne Barbeau) who is alone in her converted lighthouse. But just when it seems that she and all the others are doomed the priest discovers the stolen gold, now molded into the form of a cross, still hidden in the church. The ghosts accept the gold and, like old soldiers, simply fade away though they do make a brief return to claim a final victim...

Well, as I said earlier *The Fog* works perfectly as a series of horror set-pieces but as a story it suffers from a severe case of rising damp. It's riddled with inconsistencies, such as the fact that the ghosts are only supposed to be after the six



descendants of the original founders yet they attack people indiscriminately, even Stevie Wayne who, we are told, has only recently moved to the town. I also couldn't understand what the stolen gold was doing still hidden in the church when it had been used to develop the town all those years ago...

But the main thing wrong with the film is the ending. After all the build-up it comes as a definite damp squib though I get the feeling this may have been due to the money running out rather than ineptness on Carpenter's part. For instance, we never do see what happens to all those townspeople who were setting out on a candle-lit walk through Antonio Bay just as the fog was starting to come in... Nor does the "surprise" ending compensate for the lack of genuine climax — compared to the surprise ending in *Dressed To Kill* and even *Friday the Thirteenth* (both of which, admittedly,

were based on the ending in *Carrie*) it's a very tame affair. It's also a cheat as the audience has been led to understand that the ghosts can only exist within the fog.

All these quibbles aside *The Fog* remains a superior horror movie mainly because of Carpenter's masterful handling

Carpenter's skill increases with every movie and here his control over the visual elements is almost perfect.

of the medium. His skill as a film maker increases with every movie and here his control over the visual elements is almost perfect. Nor can anyone beat him at pulling off the traditional tricks of the horror genre — the sequence on the "empty" trawler, for example, where he

fools you into expecting a shock from one quarter and then unleashes it from an entirely different direction is brilliantly executed. He even manages to make the old cliché of a corpse returning to life seem new and fresh (unlike the corpse).

Carpenter is also well-served by a good cast including the ubiquitous Jamie Lee Curtis who at least doesn't have to play a teenage school girl this time (though apparently she does in her latest movie, *Terror Train*) and Janet Leigh, the star of *Psycho* (there are several Hitchcockian references in *The Fog* including a mention of nearby Bodega Bay which was, of course, the setting for *The Birds*).

So, all in all, *The Fog* is good value for money. It certainly stands out among the current crop of sleazy horror movies, mainly because you get the feeling that Carpenter genuinely cares about the genre he's working in and isn't just out to make a quick buck.



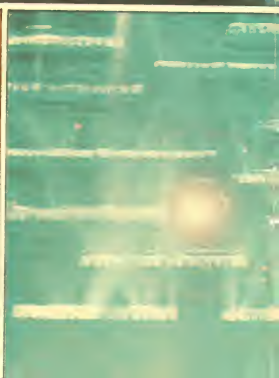
Above: Stevie Wayne (Adrienne Barbeau) warns her listeners to stay in their homes. Inset: Father Malone (Hal Holbrook) discovers the gold stolen from the sailors a hundred years before.



Above: Stevie Wayne (Adrienne Barbeau), small-town disc jockey, gazes fearfully out a window at the title star of *The Fog* (1980). Below left: A moment of panic as *The Fog* closes in. Below right: Mrs. Kobirz (Regina Walden) and Andy Wayne (Ty Mitchell) cower as *The Fog* surrounds the house.



THE SPECIAL
CLOSE ENCOUNTER
OF THE THIRDS
FEATURE BY THE



AL EDITION

COUNTERS

THIRD KIND

TONY CRAWLEY





Okay, so now we see Richard Dreyfuss as Roy Neary actually entering the mother ship. Okay, so now Spielberg has got his way, despite his last-minute change of heart after a sneak preview of the original in '78, and has put back the Pinnocchio song on the closing soundtrack: "When You Wish Upon A Star".

Wonderfull Except that it isn't. Well, maybe it is for Spielberg. Not for the rest of us.

Once we're inside Doug Trumbull's big mother of a UFO, the sequence of staggering potential and expected wonderment turns into a pretty tame disco light show.

This particular sequence, though, is the main addition to the film. The rest of the tailor's alterations are so light, they do little or nothing to improve the cut of the suit. What we have here, folks, is the Emperor's new clothes, Spielberg style. He has plainly re-cut his cloth to suit his needs, his own peace of mind from all those dreams of what he should or should not have done, first time around. And presumably, he knows not only what he is doing — but why.

The basic facts of the new version are these . . . and the numbers game involved is quite fascinating, if rather muddlesome.

1. Close Encounters of the Third Kind — The Special Edition (circa 1980, or I suppose one should say 1977/80), is now three minutes shorter than was seen in its . . . unspecial edition?

2. To be more mathematically precise, what we saw before at the running length of 12,113 feet is now 11,912 feet.



3. A full 16 minutes of the original is now residing on (the original) editor Michael Kehn's cutting room floor.

4. The new footage, comprising just the 13 minutes alluded to, is not all new. (Told you all this takes some explaining!)

5. Seven minutes, give or take the odd second or two, of old stuff has been put back into the film, none of which we have seen before, even though, in certain instances, we may think we have.

6. Six minutes, well just about, of brand new footage which we certainly haven't seen before (or needed to) have been placed into the film... enough, apparently, to dub this new look, "special".

7. The seven new/old minutes (you still with me?) were shot for the original film, then edited out, for one reason or another. Those reasons have since changed and the scenes have been restored for one new reason or another. It is this new/old footage which makes it so difficult to pinpoint, with any degree of accuracy, all of his switchback changes. He has, more often than not — end in the Neary family scenes in particular — merely swapped his takes around, using old takes for... old. He obviously re-edited his out-takes while toiling on this new version, then deciding on Take 3 or a set scene three years later, instead of the Take 1, 2 or 4 he used last time. Such changes are of shading only minimal, and subtle to Spielberg's eye alone.

8. The six (or so) new (and I now mean, new/new minutes were photographed by Allen Davian which, if nothing else, must constitute a new kind of cinematographic record for a single Hollywood feature film. Davian, a new name to the CE3K team, is now the dozenth cameraman to have worked on the movie — after Vilmos Szigmond, Billy Fraker, our own Doug Slocombe, John Alonzo, Laszlo Kovacs, Steve Poster, and the effects-camera ace Richard Yuricich, Dave Stewart, Robert Hall, Don Jarrel and Dennis Muran.

Now what Steven Spielberg has done according to one of his co-producers, Michael Phillips (the other one, Julia Phillips, is said to want nothing more to do with Spielberg), is to have re-edited the film "more like an action movie." But why? It never was, and surely never should be treated as an action movie. Leave those to Burt Reynolds and Hal Needham!

Ddd, though, are the scenes now in — end now out.

We no longer see Dreyfuss in his place of employment in Muncie, Indiana though his electrical job is, after all, part and parcel of Roy Neary's overall image; a small, but crucial part of his steady-enough character. Mr Average.

We no longer see him in the gradual throes of going mad due to the effect the UFOs and the mental picture they instill in him of The Devil's Tower landing site in Wyoming... Oh sure, we still have his model of the mountain. But gone are those great little clips of him rushing around his neighbours' gardens in his bethrobe, collecting all their rubbish and emptying it through his window — extra ballast for his model-making.

What we do see, in fact, is family man, cool-headed electrical worker Neary going nuts much more swiftly, turning into a UFO zealot and, in the process, wreaking hysterical havoc on his family. As a result of these slightly altered actions and chat in the restored scene or two, the family now becomes more hysterical than he does.

Also missing: the guards attempting to prevent Dreyfuss and Melinda Dillon starting their assault of the Wyoming mountain. That they can now begin their climb so easily now is somewhat incongruous, considering the heavy military presence in the area...

The first all-new (to us) sequence comes about 30 minutes or so in the movie, and is a second dose of the old airplanes turning up in the desert at the start of it all. Only this time it's a ship, a freighter, of some sort, dry-beached as it were, in the middle of the Gobi Desert. This was probably shot last time around and then junked. Spielberg, however, obviously considers it a good sequence, or important at least. It's neither. Not an effective shot at all the worse still, most clumsily dropped into the movie as an afterthought,



The new version contains extra footage of Truffaut in India.

inserted in the middle of the scene between the Nearys, Dreyfuss and Teri Garr.

Other deletions, by the way, include that great line from one of the UFO watchers on the road: "They can fly rings around the moon, but we're years ahead of them on the highway." And other additions, include extra footage of Truffaut, etc, in India — and a rather good, rather large, shadow of a UFO passing over the land.

Then, of course, in the words of the Young Master himself, "What we have done is take Richard Dreyfuss one step further."

He goes into Trumbull's mother ship and very little else happens, apart from Spielberg pressing the switch and turning on his icandescent lighthouse... as previously remonstrated about. We never get to see any more of the aliens. We never get to see the real inner workings, scope or size of the ship.

Above all, what we never do get to see in this new version, treatment or edition, is the one Doug Trumbull effect he could never lick in time — the cuboid ages. According to the book, these spread all over the landing site area,

"rising, knotting, binding, squeezing, bleeding, glaring and finally bursting into golden galactic dust that races in all directions and right into us."

And they were what I thought Spielberg was up to solving when I first heard he was shooting new footage of the film. As Trumbull had told us (way back in *Starburst 6*), Spielberg had written the cuboids into his script, but despite much experimentation, they were never shot.

"They were a kind of micro-UFO," Trumbull explained. "A small box. And illuminated box which could just flip all over the place — like a swarm of bees or something. The Red Whoosh, you know the little thing that kept following the three main saucers, that was supposed to be one of those Cuboids. It was a little baby Cuboid... a little bit of Disney hanging in there. Like... the ugly duckling."

Instead, Steven Spielberg settled for including his other little bit of Disney — "When You Wish Upon A Star... makes no difference who you are..." This, I must say, drastically alters the film's original and outstanding climax from the semi-religious to the wholly unctuous.

It's not the first of his films he has messed about with (in common with his pals, Coppola, Lucas, Scorsese, et al). His cinema version of *Duel* is appreciably longer than the tv original, and more recently, he restored old footage to *Jaws*, for its tv unveiling in America. In both instances, this was a matter of executive expediency or longer running time being ordered for both markets. In the case of *Close Encounters* it's... well, to tell you the truth, I'm not sure what his reasons are, or why the great fuss and sub-titling. He could have re-edited the work for re-issue quietly. If he had done so, I'm sure very few people would have noticed any difference, expecting the shining new conclusion.

I trust Spielberg has now ceased his *Close Encounters* tinkering. If not, he has maybe two alternatives: (a) go to work for Disney, if that's what he really wants (and Disney is interested); or (b) when his sleep continues to be tortured by what he forgot to do in *Close Encounters* to forget about any Special Editions and start dreaming instead about the look of the sequel. For that, in the end — literally in The End — is what he has plainly set up here.

He may not like sequels, but having got Dreyfuss inside the mother ship (which he had already done, of course, but now he's there for all disbelievers to see), we all want to see what happens next, right? Right!

And that would be one sequel where the original director would have to be in charge, not buck-passing the mission to someone else. For as *Time* magazine's critic, Richard Corliss, neatly commented recently, "Spielberg in effect is the alien who steps from the mother ship... He is shy and cute, smart and wise."

I fancy Columbia could well afford the 2-million dollars or whatever it cost to satisfy their Puckish Spielberg's indulgent whims on this venture. Then, again, I'm not altogether sure if the studio underwrote all the budget. In another of the new (probably new/old) scenes, as one of the alien ships passes overhead, it lights up a joint's neon sign below. It reads: McDonald's.

Photo by Phil Edwards

MARVEL

FILM & CONVEN

Above and below: Guest of honour Ray Harryhausen demonstrates the workings of some of his miniature models during his lecture on the Sunday.



Photo by Phil Edwards



The weekend of 18th and 19th October 1980 marked the first Marvel Comics Film and Fantasy Convention, which began as a venue for the presentation of the Starburst Awards and grew from there. Over the weekend Starburst magazine played host to a formidable list of guests. Ray Harryhausen, Barry Morse, Paul Darrow, Jacqueline Pearce, Ingrid Pitt, Caroline Munro, Dana Gillespie, Dave Prowse, Peter Mayhew, Milton Subotsky, Roy Ashton, Martin Bower, Harley Cokliss, Mat Irvine, Brian Johnson, Jim Frances, Steve Drewett, Piers Haggard, Terrance Dicks, David Maloney and Dick Mills. Others who dropped in were Ian Scoones, just about all the Starburst team and surprise guest Richard O'Brien.

The weekend raised more questions than it answered. Like, how did it go? Will Starburst be holding a similar event next year? Who will the guests be?

The perfect setting for a Convention which combines both fantasy films and comics is not the easiest place to find. The difficulty was compounded by the fact that the

Above: Barry Morse chats with one of his younger fans after his highly successful talk about his career. Left: Barry Morse demonstrates, on Editor Alan McKenzie, the perils of being recognised in public. Right: Mat Irvine hosts the Harryhausen lecture on the Sunday afternoon.



Photo by Joyce Agee



Photo by Joyce Agee

COMICS

FANTASY CONVENTION '80

lead time up to the Convention was a mere three months rather than the year or so needed to book some of London's larger exhibition centres. Should Marvel hold another Convention next year, it will be necessary to find a venue with a larger cinema, bigger lecture rooms and a smaller main hall. Nevertheless, the reaction from the hundreds of Starburst readers who travelled from all over the country was that they enjoyed themselves and that they would like to see a similar event next year.

Over the next few pages we present a selection of candid photographs snapped by our resident photographer Joyce Agee (with a couple of offerings from Starburst regular Phil Edwards).

As for next year, who knows? We would very much like to hold another Marvel Comics Film and Fantasy Convention. And with the right venue and enough lead time for organisation, Marvel will do justice to the potential shown by this year's event. However, we would be interested to hear any constructive suggestions you have . . .

Photo by Joyce Agee



Above: (left to right) Jud Hamilton, Caroline Munro and Starburst writer Tony Crawley. Below: The three faces of Caroline. Caroline fields questions about her career in the movies.

Photo by Joyce Agee



Photo by Joyce Agee



Above: Tony Crawley asks a few questions of his own during his talk with Caroline Munro. Below: (left to right) Jud Hamilton, Caroline Munro and Alan McKenzie.





Above left: Hammer horror queen Ingrid Pitt signs autographs for her many fans after her talk at the Marvel Convention. Below left: Carolina Munro signs autographs and chats with her fans, guarded by an Imperial Stormtrooper. Top: Film producer Milton Subotsky is interviewed by Cinefantastique correspondent and sometime Starburst contributor Alan Jones. Above: John Brosnan graciously signs an autograph for his admirer. Below: Peter Mayhew, perhaps better known as Chewbacca, is caught in a happy moment.

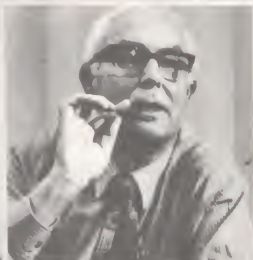




Above: Dave Prowse (Darth Vader) spends a few moments chatting with a fan. Below: Dana Gillespie gave a fascinating talk on her career.



Above: A candid photograph of Mat Irvine, who appears for all the world to be trying the Harlem Hustle with Boris the Spider. Three fans look on bemused. Below: Richard Mills gave a fascinating talk and demonstration of the art of Radiophysics. And contrary to appearances he did not forget his lines once.



Top: Harley Cokliss, second unit director on The Empire Strike Back and director of That Summer, answers fans' questions about his work. Below: Veteran make up artist Roy Ashton talks about his years with Hammer Films. Below: Starburst editor Alan McKenzie and Dr Who scripter Tarrance Dicks share a joke before Carolina Munro's interview.





Top: An Imperial Stormtrooper holds back the crowds before the beginning of the Starburst Fantasy Awards. The Awards were running twenty minutes late at this point and the Stormtrooper was getting nervous! Above left: Model maker Martin Bower dropped in and gave a chat about special effects. Above centre: Another photo of the very lovely Dana Gillespie. Above right: An unexpected visitor to the Convention was Richard O'Brien, creator of the Rocky Horror Show and portrayer of Riff-Raff for the film version. Below left: The dealers area did brisk business, selling everything from film stills to comic books. Below: A group of mystified Conventioneers have their picture snapped with a Stormtrooper.





Top left: Jim Frances and Steve Drewett receive their Starburst Award from Ray Harryhausen for their special effects on *Blake's 7*. Top centre: Paul Darrow, co-hosting the ceremony with Caroline Munro, accepts his Award for his role as Avon. Top right: Actress Tacy Kneale receives an Award on behalf of her father Nigel Kneale for his *Quatermass* script. Right: Ray Harryhausen presents a Gort trophy to Jacqueline Pearce for her role as Servelan in *Blake's 7*. Far right: Peter Mayhew accepts the Award for Best Film on behalf of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Below (left to right): Piers Haggard, director of *Quatermass*; Sue Walker of *Lucasfilm*; David Maloney, producer of *Blake's 7* and Dave (Darth Vader) Prowse. Bottom: *The Empire Strikes Back* also won an Award for its special effects. The Award was accepted by Brian Johnson, supervisor of special effects on the film.



Photos by Joyce Agee

Television Awards

Best Special Effects: Jim Frances and Steve Drewett (*Blake's 7*)

Best Script: Nigel Kneale (*Quatermass*)

Best Director: Piers Haggard (*Quatermass*)

Best Actress: Jacqueline Pearce (*Blake's 7*)

Best Actor: Paul Darrow (*Blake's 7*)

Best TV Show: *Blake's 7*

FILM AWARDS

Best Special Effects: Brian Johnson (*Empire Strikes Back*)

Best Script: Leigh Brackett/Larry Kasden (*Empire Strikes Back*)

Best Director: Ridley Scott (*Alien*)

Best Actress: Sigourney Weaver (*Alien*)

Best Actor: Harrison Ford (*Empire Strikes Back*)

Best Film: *Empire Strikes Back*

NEW CATEGORIES

Best Fantasy Book: Douglas Adams (*Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy*)

Outstanding Achievement by an Individual: George Lucas (for the *Star Wars* series)



BRIAN CLEMENS

One of the most prolific writer/producers in the film and television business, Brian Clemens is best known for his substantial contributions to the Avengers tv series. Though he is also responsible for *Kronos Vampire Hunter*, *Thriller* and *The Professionals*. John Fleming interviewed Clemens earlier this year.

Brian Clemens is amazingly prolific, churning out screenplays, teleplays, occasional stageplays and creating such varying series as *Thriller*, *The New Avengers*, *My Wife Next Door* and *The Professionals*.

Born in Croydon in 1931, he started writing at the age of five when he produced a slim volume called *Brocky and The Bad Adder* about a badger and a snake. When he was ten, his father asked him what he wanted to be. He said he didn't want to be an engine driver like everyone else: he wanted to be a writer. The next year, his father bought him a typewriter and young Brian's first paid story appeared in *The Hospital Saturday Fund Magazine* the year after that; his fee was one guinea. He was twelve. All his

uncles were mechanically-minded but one in particular used to bring him books — everything from engineering manuals to Tolstoy.

During the War, young Brian was evacuated to Hitchin, Hertfordshire, and didn't go to school due to a bureaucratic foul-up. The authorities in Croydon thought he was being educated in Hitchin and the people in Hitchin thought he was educated in Croydon. "I didn't go to school for very long," he says. "My education was simply reading a lot of books and going to the cinema."

Work started at fourteen. He wanted to be a journalist but couldn't get a job because he had no academic qualifications. Eventually, he became a messenger-boy for an advertising agency in Fleet

Street and worked his way up to become a packer. Then he did two years National Service in the Army: an experience which, he told me, matured him and gave him a useful background in weaponry.

"I'd never shot a gun before," he says, "but I found I was a natural shot. So they

Below left: Linda Thorson played Tara King, pictured here from the episode *Take Me to Your Leader*. Below centre: *Star of The Avengers* Patrick MacNee as John Steed. Below right: Diana Rigg in a publicity still from *The Avengers*. Below right background: *Behind-the-scenes* on the *Police Surgeon* episode *The Bigger They Are*.



made me a training instructor and I spent two years training people how to kill other people. It's been useful to me in my writing because, in the course of that, I went to the Army Smallarms School where you get the chance to fire everything. I've fired flintlock rifles and flamethrowers and Thompson sub-machineguns and everything."

On leaving the Army, he was offered a job as a private eye with John Smart's Detective Agency in London. "But," he says, "it would have meant going to Leeds for three months to train — why Leeds, I've never found out. I was just coming out of the Army, having been away from home, and I didn't really

fancy going to Leeds so I didn't take the job. Otherwise I suppose, by now, I'd have a hat like Humphrey Bogart."

He ended up working as a copywriter at the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency and then had a lucky (but complicated) break. One of the JWT girls happened to play bridge one night with someone who was looking for a writer for somebody else's film company. She suggested Brian Clemens.

As a result, he started writing for the legendary Danziger Brothers, churning out scripts for cheap second features. "The Danzigers were smashing," he says, "because they used to move from studio to studio and use old sets and props. If

they moved to MGM, they might have a submarine, The Old Bailey and a dozen Father Christmas outfits. So they'd say *Write an 80-minute film that incorporates all three*. The Danzigers used to ask me to write one half-hour a week and occasionally they'd give me 10-12 days to write an 80-minute B-feature. They paid me a flat sum every week; I didn't get paid by the script and there were no royalties. But they were very kind to me and the nicest thing was that virtually everything I wrote was made."

Even then, Clemens was prolific. When he arrived at the Danzigers' there were three other writers. After about three months, he was the only writer because



he could be depended on to turn out something worthwhile every week.

Eventually, his talent led him to ABC Television (now part of Thames Television) who intended to re-vamp their series *Police Surgeon*, which starred Ian Hendry and co-starred Patrick MacNee. The new re-vamped series was to be called *The Avengers* because Ian Hendry's screen fiancée had been killed and the Hendry/MacNee characters were out to find her killers and avenge her death. It was a rather gritty, realistic series and Clemens remembers his first sight of MacNee was when he saw him "slurping in through the door wearing an old raincoat rather like Columbo".

"There wasn't really a format for the series," Clemens remembers "Everybody tries to take credit for creating *The Avengers* but it was self-generating, really. It was just a doctor (*Hendry*) and a special agent (*MacNee*) and was quite terrible — a million miles away from what *The Avengers* became. The first one was all about razor-gangs. It was trying to be 'real' — a bit like Edgar Wallace, I suppose. I wrote the first episode and then, I think, two or three more for Ian Hendry. Then Ian left the series and they were stuck with six scripts for Ian (written by various writers) and they couldn't afford to commission new scripts. So they brought in Honor Blackman and she played the man's part. It was around that time that Patrick MacNee was looking for something to do with his character, which didn't do anything on the page. He was really a stereotyped Scotland Yard man. He came in and said *Yes, guv* and *No guv* and things. So Pat put on a bowler hat and picked up an umbrella and I think it was him who said to Honor Blackman *Why don't you wear trousers and boots? I like them*. Then it kind of escalated and the writers really caught up with it after Pat and Honor had set it going on a trend. We overtook the trend and made it even more consciously trendy after that."

The first *Avengers* series after Ian Hendry left had actually featured two girl assistants each appearing with Patrick MacNee on alternate weeks — Honor Blackman as Cathy Gale and Julie Stevens as Venus Smith. Publicity described the Julie Stevens character confusingly as a "zany, zippy bargee's teenage daughter and nightclub singer, who has a penchant for helping Steed in his battle against international crime". However, after one season, Julie Stevens became pregnant and left the series (She appeared on *Play School* shortly after her son was born and then continued to make occasional appearances on children's television.)

Honor Blackman remained in the series, became a star, then joined James Bond in *Goldfinger*. I have always thought *The Avengers'* increasingly sur-



realistic style affected the style of the Bond films, which had started out as straight action films but then veered off into fantasy. Clemens isn't sure if he agrees:

"Whether it was *The Avengers* that affected them or whether it was just the climate and we were reflecting it more accurately or faster than Bond, I don't know. I wanted to make an *Avengers* feature-film in 1964 and, if we'd done it, we would have made a fortune because we'd have been ahead of Bond. It's really a question of trends: optimism and pessimism. A lot depends on the economic climate. Some of the frostiest things came out of Hollywood during and after the Depression — and I think that's

going to happen again now. Spoofiness has become acceptable. If they re-ran *The Avengers* of the late to mid-sixties now, I think they'd be an enormous hit in the same way as *Monty Python*. I remember I used to watch *At Last! The 1948 Show!* and nobody else used to watch it, but now *Monty Python's* big business. *The 1948 Show* was ahead of its time. *The Avengers* was always a cult show, not a mass-appeal one; it got ratings, but it was never in the *Coronation Street* or *Sweeney* class. It could be now: I think it would appeal enormously to a generation that isn't really aware of it."

The two words that epitomise everyone's memories of *The Avengers* are visual style. How did that develop?



Above left: In the episode *Dead Man's Treasure*, Steed (Patrick MacNee) tries out a racing car simulator invented by Benstead (Arthur Lowe). The snag is that every time he makes a mistake, the simulator delivers an electric shock through the steering wheel. Above: Ian Hendry as he appeared in *Police Surgeon*, the forerunner to *The Avengers*. Below left: Steed and Tara (Linda Thorson) keep an appointment with Mother (Patrick Newell) in the episode *Love All*. Below: Steed and Emma Peel (Diana Rigg).



According to Clemens, an important factor was simple economics.

"A lot of the evolution of the style was really because they didn't have any sets. (Director) Peter Hammond was always shooting through wine glasses because, if he moved the camera over here, they didn't have any windows or walls. A great deal of the evolution of the style was pure economics. But, having seen the way it was going, when we started making the shows on film (with the Diana Rigg series) I introduced certain ground-rules: that there shouldn't be any blood, women shouldn't be killed and the streets should only be populated with people in the plot. They tended to be empty streets because if you put

Steed, who is an anachronism — a pantomime character — alongside any reality, then you'll stop believing in him. It's really in the mould of a Doris Day comedy, where there are no upstairs rooms. The world of fantasy only works if you totally believe in the world it's enclosed in and we tried to do that in *The Avengers*. In some of the plots we broke the rules. We did have one where it was necessary to show ordinary, busy streets in order to then say *Now there's nobody there*. Generally speaking, we abided by the rules, but the rules were always totally flexible: one could always bend the rules for the sake of an exceptional plot". Another part of *The Avengers'* style was the inversion of the dramatic

cliche. "We did that an awful lot," says Clemens, "like Sherlock Holmes planting clues. And we had a marvellous teaser once with the body outline marked out on the floor and this chap comes in, they shoot him and he falls into the outline. We were always doing that sort of thing."

The series got more and more bizarre and, as well as debunking Sherlock Holmes, famous film plots started turning up — *High Noon*, *The Maltese Falcon* and the Tarzan movies were just some. "At one time," says Clemens, "the premise was that once we attacked a subject nobody could ever do it for real again. But, again, we were ahead of our time and it didn't totally work in international terms because, when you got to the teutonic masses or the mid-West, they were all taking it for real. Today, I think it would have a completely different impact."

Throughout the various *Avengers* series, Clemens' influence was considerable. On the early videotaped series, he had just been an occasional writer. After the Honor Blackman series, he was offered a job as a general videotape producer-director at ABC Television. He turned this down when he was offered a job as script editor and associate producer on the new filmed *Avengers* series starring Diana Rigg. "What they wanted," he explains, "was someone who knew *The Avengers* and knew film and I was the only person who was qualified." Today, he has no regrets about turning down the producer-director job: "If I'd produced and directed on tape, I could be sitting with Sydney Newman now. (Former head of drama at ABC and the BBC.) Sydney was a brilliant man but didn't make any impact internationally. The thing about getting involved in something that was very successful internationally was that I could go to Hollywood four years later and people had heard of me and knew what I'd done."

"I don't hold a great brief for America. But unfortunately, as we have no film industry, if you want something to be *done* these days, you have to think of America as the mecca of film-making. It's sad. I mean, five years ago, I wanted to make Britain the Hollywood of television product — which it could easily be if you could find *anybody* who's willing to take a *chance*. And it's not much of a chance. If you're a millionaire and I say to you *Give me a million pounds and I'll invest it in television product*, you might not do *Jaws*, you might not make fifty million, but you wouldn't lose your million. I don't just mean *The New Avengers*. Almost anything. I don't think anything I've written has been transatlantic, but they've always sold internationally and I don't just mean America. I mean, *Thriller* has sold in 90 territories and *The Avengers* has sold in something like 120 and *The Professionals* is selling. I



Above: John Steed (Patrick MacNee in a totally outrageous suit and bowler). Above right: One of the earliest Avengers girls, Venus Smith (Julie Stevens), who alternated week-by-week with Cathy Gail (Honor Blackman). From the episode The Removal Man.

don't think indigenous success (in Britain) means quite so much. It means people in the local pub like you, but it restricts you ultimately."

One reason Clemens' work has always sold internationally is probably because he writes strong plots and, if he has to be pigeonholed at all as a writer, he could be called a 'plot' man. "Yes," he says, "I suppose I am a plot man. Of late, I've tried to be more, but I *am* a plot man. I think that's fair. I've never pretended I'm a brilliant writer, but I can think up 400 plots today, if you want them, and some will be quite new." So is it an innate skill? "I think it must be, yes. Or it may be that I've seen so many plots I understand them so well... I understand that, if you change one brick, you've got a different plot."

Another trait that often surfaces in Clemens' work is a quirky humour. "You see," he says, "humour is enduring. It's like Dickens. Nothing could be more dated than Dickens — he's talking about social injustices that have gone 50, 60 maybe 100 years ago. But because he's

funny and he's warm, we still relate to him. I think modern writing and modern concepts — people are resisting being funny or warm as if making people laugh or cry weakens them. I think that's ridiculous. It's just as dogmatic as certain MGM products of the 1950s which portrayed the American way of life as it wasn't. Now we've got another way of life (*on screen*) which isn't really like that either. It's only showing one half of the truth. I don't believe people can survive in our society without crying or laughing. You couldn't. How could you exist in some of those coal-mining places up north or in Wales if you didn't have that asset of being able to release the optimism within you? I think it's terribly important.

"Over the last six or seven years on television we've had a lot of programmes showing that people who lived between 1910 and 1950 had a terrible time. My father and mother grew up in the East End of London just beyond the turn of the century. My father's written about it and told me about it and I'd rather be

there then than here now. I run two cars and have a good life, but *his* life was richer.

"He was an engineer, but he lived in a real slummy area and all his memories are rich — even the bad memories are rich. My memories are bland compared with his. I don't struggle and suffer at my age as he did at the same age. At the end of the First World War, my father walked something like 22 miles a day just looking for work. He didn't like it at the time but, along the way, he met all sorts of interesting people. At least he knew he was alive. Sometimes I think you have to have a little bit of suffering to be made aware that you're alive. I think the antithesis of that is California, where they're all very much alive but many of them might as well be embalmed."

Next issue: Brian Clemens talks about his early life, his film career (including Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter) and The New Avengers.

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'IT'S ONLY A MOVIE!'

A regular column
by author and
Starburst film
critic John Brosnan.

From time immemorial, or at least since the early 1950s, science fiction fans have complained about the way sf novels are treated by film makers, the usual moan being that the ingredients that made a particular novel good science fiction somehow got lost during the transfer from page to screen. One can point to several examples of this, like *The Tenth Victim*, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, *Damnation Alley*, *Logan's Run* and *The Final Programme*, and as a rule the most successful sf films tend to come from original screenplays, such as *Forbidden Planet*, *Westworld*, 2001, *Star Wars*, etc, though there are exceptions (*Village of the Damned*, *Colossus*, and *Soylent Green* are three examples that spring to mind).

On the whole horror fans have had less cause for complaint, mainly because the key elements of any horror story can usually be grasped more easily by film makers than is the case with sf... often a much more elusive genre. But now along comes *The Shining* and horror fans suddenly know what it's like to have one of their favourite works disembowelled by a film maker. But has Stephen King's novel really been mistreated by Kubrick? Or is just that the fans are unable to see that Kubrick has made a film that transcends the genre-limitations of the original?

Certain critics believe that the latter is so. Derek Malcolm, writing in *The Guardian*, said: "I can't help thinking that the Stephen King original, with its spook-riden, other-worldly junketings gets in the way of Kubrick's grim vision, finally cheapening and distorting it." And Peter Ackroyd in *The Spectator* wrote: "... *The Shining* lingers in the mind long after most horror films have passed into the vast limbo of the unremembered; despite its evident shortcomings, this film bears about as much relation to that debased genre as Boewulf does to Paddington Bear."

What these two "quality" critics are saying, in effect, is that no horror film can be any good therefore if *The Shining* is good, and they think it is, then it can't be a horror film (this same approach has been applied to science fiction by literary critics — because novels like *1984* and *Brave New World* are classified as "literature" then they can't be science fiction). Malcolm's comment about King's spook-riden junketings getting in the way of Kubrick's film and cheapening it etc is particularly irritating. Anyone would think that King held a gun to Kubrick's

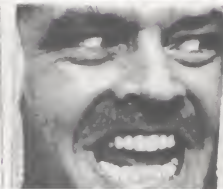
head and forced him to buy the film rights to his novel.

Equally galling is Ackroyd's waffle about *The Shining* lingering in his mind long after other horror films have vanished into limbo or whatever. As he obviously wrote his review only a short time after seeing the movie one wonders how long he usually manages to remember the films he sees. Just because he has succeeded in retaining his memory of *The Shining* for more than 24 hours doesn't automatically make it a sure-fire candidate for the posterity stakes...

But Malcolm and Ackroyd are right

about one thing — that inside *The Shining* an entirely different movie is struggling to get out. King's novel centred on the little boy's extra-sensory powers — his "shining". It was this power that "generated" the supernatural events within the Overlook Hotel, and it was this power that the evil force that dominated the hotel wanted to keep permanently in order to increase its strength and influence. And to get this power the evil force exploited the weaknesses within the father, Jack Torrance — these weaknesses being a violent temper and an inability to control his drinking. The "shining", also

THE SHINING



serves as the instrument by which the boy and his mother are saved at the end, summoning Halloran to come to the rescue (in the movie Halloran arrives just in time to be killed by Torrance — one of Kubrick's many little jokes at the expense of the novel).

Kubrick, however, doesn't really seem interested in the "shining" or in the hotel's supernatural forces generally — while the novel ends in a storm of supernatural activity as the Overlook comes to life and Torrance is taken over completely by the hotel, which keeps his body alive even after he's been stabbed by his

wife, the movie ends on a much more prosaic level with a deranged father chasing his young son around a maze with an axe, all elements of the supernatural having been left behind.

The film that Kubrick personally wanted to make, I feel, concerned the horror of one man's mental break-down and the terrors his sick, decaying mind creates. I think Kubrick would have preferred it if all the manifestations within the hotel could have been interpreted as merely being Torrance's mental projections and it's the sequences in the film that *do* suggest this that work best,

such as when Torrance has his first encounter with Lloyd the barman in the Overlook ballroom.

In fact, what Kubrick *really* wanted to do, I believe, was remake Roman Polanski's *Repulsion*, which was about a mentally-sick girl who becomes lost in a nightmare world of her own creation and can eventually no longer distinguish reality from illusions. And, significantly, *both* films end with a long, slow close-up on a photograph that reveals the central character almost lost within a group setting...

On the subject of turning novels into films, director Karel Reisz, who is currently making the film version of John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, said in a recent interview: "The whole question of being 'faithful' to a novel is a non-question really. You don't do a novel a favour by being faithful to it. You do it, and yourself, a favour by producing something that is valid as a film." Okay, we've established that *The Shining* isn't faithful to the novel but does it meet Reisz's criteria? Is it valid as a film?

Well, I think *parts* of it are very impressive — brilliant even — and I was bowled over by the sets, the photography and the general atmosphere of the movie as well as by Nicholson's performance (I don't think the latter is the disaster that some say it is — the problem lies with the script because the character of Torrance isn't allowed to develop in any way. He starts off rather crazy and proceeds upwards from there at a rate of knots), but I don't think it is valid as a movie. And the reason is precisely that given by Derek Malcolm and Peter Ackroyd — that mixed in with Kubrick's movie are the remains of King's novel and the two just don't mesh together. The result is a movie fatally flawed artistically. But, of course, this isn't poor King's fault, as Malcolm and Ackroyd seem to be suggesting, it's entirely Kubrick's. He apparently lacked the courage or the artistic sense to be *completely* unfaithful to the novel. What he should have done was just use the title and the basic setting and then thrown out all the other King ingredients, along with the topiary animals that he junked at the very beginning, and then gone ahead and made the film he obviously wanted to make.

This would have left the way clear for someone else to one day actually film King's novel which, unrepentant fan of this "debased genre" that I am, I still think would make a damn good horror film.



BOOK WORLD

Nothing impresses the book trade as much as an unheralded bestseller: a book which achieves success without all the usual accompaniment of promotion and hype. Thus Stephen Donaldson's star is presently in the ascendant, because his fantasy trilogy *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever* achieved extraordinary sales both here and in the USA, for such a vast work by an unknown author. The horde of Tolkien fans voted emphatically for it with their cash.

This leaves me out of step again, because I thought *Thomas Covenant* — or at least the first volume, *Lord Foul's Bane*, which was as far as I got — was dreadful rubbish. I'm assured by people whose judgement I respect that the second and third volumes are far better, but there's a limit to how much swamp I'm prepared to wade through in order to reach the fertile farther shore. But now Donaldson is back, with the first volume of a new *Thomas Covenant* trilogy — *The Wounded Land* (Fontana, £1.75) — and so I thought I'd give him another try.

Thomas Covenant is an unlikely hero for a fantasy novel: he's a leper, with a couple of missing fingers and several deep psychological scars. He's also thoroughly unlikeable. In the first trilogy he passes several times from our world into a fantasy realm — the Land — where he is acclaimed as the mythical hero Berek Halfhand and does battle on behalf of the good guys with the evil Lord Foul, who seeks to destroy all that is good and beautiful in the Land. He seems to win in the end, but it isn't a final victory, as he discovers when he returns to the Land in this new book. Although only ten years have passed in our world, centuries have gone by in the Land, and Lord Foul is now fully in the ascendant again. The once beautiful Land has turned into an arid and hostile waste — only small enclaves of green remain. *Covenant* — this time accompanied by another character from our world, the female doctor Linden Avery — rolls up his metaphorical sleeves and sets off to save the Land all over again.

The good news is that *The Wounded Land* is a great deal better written than *Lord Foul's Bane*, although Donaldson's compulsion to show off his command of obscure vocabulary is still immensely irritating. And the hostile Land is a much more interesting place than the paradise-away-from-Earth encountered in the first trilogy. But I still felt a lot of words were being expended on not very much, and I still couldn't care less what happened to

Thomas Covenant (or Linden Avery, a character quite as unsympathetic as Covenant). I won't be reading the remaining volumes but I'm sure many thousands of devotees will be queuing up.

It must be trilogy month, because here's the first volume of an sf trilogy by Harry Harrison, *Homeworld* (Granada, £1.25). The overall title for the trilogy is *To The Stars*, but this first volume is set entirely on Earth. It's some hundreds of years in the future, and on the surface everything is peaceful. The hero of the novel, Jan Kulozik, lives a prosperous and contented life as a valued engineer working in micro- μ computing. The story is that of his gradual discovery of the realities of his world's stability: a vast underemployed, underprivileged police state. Everything is fine as long as you don't ask questions, but Kulozik is inquisitive, and soon finds himself mixed up with revolutionary politics.

Harrison is generally at his best writing fast-paced action adventure, and he is unusual among sf writers of his type for his liberal political stance. Most of his colleagues, one feels, would tend to approve of a system which kept the proles firmly in their place. There is a welcome feeling of genuine anger behind Kulozik's changing attitudes as he discovers what has been going on. For all that, though, the novel doesn't amount to anything much. There's a lot of chasing around, and it's a very fast read, but one suspects that the real meat of the story has been held back for the two volumes yet to come. *Homeworld*

doesn't really stand up by itself, but with this trilogy I'll be reading the next book when it appears.

A new novel by Ursula Le Guin is normally something to rejoice over, but I found *Threshold* (Gollancz, £5.95) curiously bland and unsatisfying. It's a fantasy novel which hovers uneasily on the border between books for teenagers and adult novels.

It concerns two young Americans, Hugh and Irena, who independently discover a place in a

forest which is a threshold to another world: a place of forests and perpetual twilight. In our world both Hugh and Irena have emotional problems, and initially they find it hard to accept one another (they need to co-operate as they can only be sure of crossing the threshold when they are together). In the other world they have to fight a dragon on behalf of the friendly villagers they meet there, and in doing so they slay their own fears and inadequacies and become whole people.

In outline this sounds not unlike Stephen Donaldson's work, but in fact the two authors are very dissimilar. Le Guin is as unadventurous as Donaldson is showy, but unfortunately in this novel her serene prose slows into a stately plod which is frankly rather dull.

Hugh and Irena spend much of the novel hiking around the twilight woods, immersing themselves in icy water, and communing with unspoilt nature.

Passages like this —



This month, regular *Book World* columnist John Bowles casts a critical eye over the first in a projected trilogy from popular trilologist Stephen Donaldson, another first-part-of-trilogy by sf master Harry Harrison plus the new novel from Ursula Le Guin and a novel by newcomer Rob Swigart.



"He saw that he was on the side of a mountain. To his right and ahead, beyond a falling sweep of treetops, the rim of a farther mountain stood dark against the clarity of the sky. He walked on more slowly, a little dazed, feeling himself as if floating between the vast, obscure valleys and the vast gulfs of the sky" — are okay in themselves, but after several pages of the same sort of stuff the mind does tend to get a little dazed and lose its grip on the page. Good for insomnia, though.

Opposite page: The first book in the new fantasy trilogy from Stephen Donaldson, who has acquired something of a cult following over the last two years. Left: The new novel from sf veteran Harry Harrison, author of the highly acclaimed *Stainless Steel Rat* series. *Homeworld* is the first book in another trilogy, this time entitled *To the Stars*. Below: A science fiction spoof from newcomer Rob Swigart called *The Time Trip*.

boy genius who has invented a method of time travel, and resolves to travel back to the time of Gilgamesh to discover how to get Penny back. (Don't ask me to explain why: read the book.) Meanwhile Penny, having been voted Suicide of the Year, is reincarnated in Gilgamesh's time as a temple prostitute...

By turns satirical, absurd, childish and occasionally even serious, *The Time Trip* is by no means wholly successful. In the end I felt Swigart was trying to be too clever by half. But from page to page it's almost always entertaining, and if you are looking for something a little different from the usual run of sf novels it's well worth a look. It does seem overpriced, though.

News has just come in of another two sf magazines biting the dust in the USA: *Galileo*, which has never been widely distributed in this country, and *Galaxy*, which has led a shadowy existence for the last two or three years. *Galileo* was at first a very successful experiment in magazine publishing, building up from an initial circulation of 8000 to around 75000. Unfortunately it did so by offering cut-rate subscriptions which ultimately didn't bring in enough money to finance all the expense which went with the expansion. While this was going on, the owners of *Galileo* bought *Galaxy* — one of the oldest and most respected sf magazines, dating back to 1950 — but only ever managed to publish one issue, which they failed to distribute properly. The market for the science fiction short story — the form which has produced so much good work over the years — continues to contract steadily. The market for novels, meanwhile, continues to worsen in this country. As the publishing recession shows no signs of levelling off, companies everywhere are postponing publication of titles, and aren't buying new ones.

Sad days. At least a number of British writers do have new novels forthcoming in the next few months: Michael Moorcock's ambitious *Byzantium Endures* from Secker & Warburg in January; J.G. Ballard's *Hello America* from Cape; the first volume of Brian Aldiss's *Helliconia* trilogy (also Cape); expatriate American John Sladek's *Roderick* (Collins); Christopher Priest's *The Affirmation* and Robert Holdstock's *When Time-Winds Blow* (both Faber); Bob Shaw's *The Ceres Solution*, and Richard Cowper's sequel to *The Road to Corlay* (Gollancz). That's an unusually rich and appetising crop, and I'll be reporting on many of them as soon as I can get hold of copies.

And now for something completely different: *Time Trip* by Rob Swigart (Coronet, £1.40) could certainly never be accused of serenity or stateliness. It's a frenetically clever novel dealing with the after-life, time travel, and several dozen other subjects. Swigart is a writer whose gurus are people like Vonnegut and Tom Robbins rather than Heinlein or Asimov; in consequence the book isn't labelled sf. It starts with the death by suicide of Penny Gamesh, and her subsequent checking-in at the Death-west Holiday Inn. Getting over the shock this causes him, her husband Barney teams up with a

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A Column by Tise Vahimagi

Escapism. People want escapism probably more than ever. And the younger generation adore horror stories." Hammer House of Horror producer Roy Skeggs explaining why he feels that horror stories can still be a successful form on television.

He's probably right, but not with the way that they're doing it right now. With the segments seen so far, the stories appear to range from some very heavy-handed horror, essayed to better effect in the '60-'62 Karloff Thriller series, to the good, old snap-ending/twist-in-the-tale format, previously done with much more imagination and verve in Serling's *Twilight Zone*. Hammer's premiere segment, *Witching Time*, is probably the best one so far. All the necessary components — cruising camera, moody light and shadow, murmuring score, characters' self-doubt, etc. — that this sort of story requires were evident, albeit in true, explicit 1980s fashion. As such the show came across as a natural development of such earlier stuff, in the same possession-by-witchcraft vein, as *La Strega* Thriller ('61) and *Since Aunt Ada Came to Stay* Night Gallery ('71).

The make-or-break of such anthology series as *Hammer House of Horror*, for me, rests with the feeling that you've seen the same thing done before. And done better. The majority of television today may merely be a weak reflection of its former self (witness especially the crime dramas and the English sit-coms) but there is really no reason for it to go so far down the line as to rehash genre material that one still remembers. If this now sounds like a cry for "they don't make 'em like they used to" it is not intended to be. On the contrary, they shouldn't try to make 'em like they used to. They should progress and explore, try new ideas and forms. Pursue new formats not old formulas. However, though the stories themselves may ring distant bells in the foggy memory of early tele-viewing, there are some interesting and inventive moments within the teleplays: Patricia Quinn's witch recoiling in horror when John Finch demonstrates the gushing water of his flush-toilet, in *Witching Time*; the explosive torrent of blood hitting the childrens' party, in *The House That Bleed to Death*.

In their respective ways, *Twilight Zone*, *Thriller*, *One Step Beyond*, *The Sixth Sense*, *Night Gallery* and *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* are all tv ancestors of *Hammer House of Horror*. So, for all you

out there who may have missed these earlier examples of tele-fantasy, Hammer now offers a faint glimmer of what they were about.

Last Word on the Subject Department: I'm not too sure if I like all my horror stories, via the tube, set in the present-day but if we have to have them I would love to see something along the lines of H.P. Lovecraft Theatre, with contemporary London as a setting. If you want to know what I mean, try walking along the South Bank late one night!

The September WTV/Scala cinema screening, in London, of four *Avengers* episodes rekindled an interest I have had in the tv work of Patrick MacNee since the "golden days" of *The Avengers*, during the mid '60s. This appreciation was recently given a further boost following a private screening of *The Little Wonders* ('64) episode, from the Honor Blackman term.

He was born in 1922 in London; spent most of his childhood away from home in various public schools; made his name in 1947 with the play *The White Devil*. His real christian name is Daniel but his mother had a fondness for Patrick, and it stuck with him. Along with his stage work MacNee appeared in bit parts in such films as *Hamlet* ('48), *The Elusive Pimpernel*, *Dick Barton at Bay* (both '50), *Scrooge* ('51), and *Battle of the River Plate* ('56). He spent eight years, during the '50s, working in Canadian television alongside actors such as Christopher Plummer, Lorne Green and Barry Morse. He returned to England in 1960 and produced the Sir Winston Churchill tv documentary *The Valiant Years*. He was then offered the part of Ian Hendry's sidekick for a series that was just changing its title from *Police Surgeon* to *The Avengers*. This became the turning-point of his career, some twenty years after he had started in the business.

Since that time, covering two decades, MacNee has logged up something in the region of 140 hours (in the character of John Steed) for *The Avengers*, along with guest shots in *Columbo*, *Alias Smith and Jones*, *The Virginian*, etc. He admits basing his Steed character on a combination of Leslie Howard's Sir Percy Blakeney in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* and Ralph Richardson's performance in *Q. Planes*, but the nature of MacNee's Steed goes a lot further than that. Initially, Steed may be seen as the suave, elegant, broily-wielding man-about-town, a connoisseur of fine foods, champagne and beautiful women, but on closer inspection MacNee infuses the character with a



Above: A publicity still from the Emma Peel series. Steed and Diana Rigg as Mrs Emma Peel.

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of *The Avengers* featuring Patrick MacNee as John Steed.
Right: Patrick MacNee as the suave John Steed.

unique quality, coupled with a delightful dash of cynicism. A splendid scene illustrating the Steed/MacNee sense of "humour" comes along in *The Little Wonders*, where Steed and Cathy Gale are secretly inspecting the luggage of a newly-arrived villain at an airport. Steed produces a knife and calmly starts ripping open some of the luggage; Cathy goes into a flap over the obvious destruction while Steed simply smiles and says something to the effect that the guy won't be needing to travel anywhere for a while.

By way of providing a glimpse into the Steed/MacNee persona I cite below what I regard as six of the best Steed-MacNee episodes from *The Avengers* series:

1. *Castle De'Ath* ('65). Director: James Hill. Writer: John Lucarotti. With/Diana Rigg, Gordon Jackson, Robert Urquart, Jack Lambert, James Copeland, Russell Waters. The Avengers investigate sinister goings-on in a gloomy Scottish castle; Steed, wearing a kilt, has a rousing battle at the climax, leaping onto tables and brandishing a claymore.
2. *The Girl from Auntie* ('66). d. Roy Baker. wr. Roger Marshall. w/Rigg; Liz Fraser, Alfred Burke, Bernard Cribbins, David Bauer, Mary Merrall. Steed searches for a kidnapped Emma Peel, meeting a variety of weird and deadly characters along the way; this episode has some of Steed's finest moments.
3. *The Correct Way to Kill* ('67). d. Charles Crichton. wr. Brian Clemens. w/Rigg, Anna Quayle, Michael Gough, Philip Madoc, Terence Alexander. The Avengers come across an unusual seat of learning — a special school for gentlemen-killers, all of whom are dressed like Steed.
4. *The Superlative Seven* ('67). d. Sidney Hayes. wr. Brian Clemens. w/Rigg, Charlotte Rampling, Brian Blessed, James Maxwell, Hugh Manning, Leone Greene. Steed is invited to a sinister fancy dress party which develops into a bizarre variation of the 'Ten Little Indians' theme.
5. *Mission . . . Highly Improbable* ('67). d. Robert Day. wr. Philip Leven. w/Rigg, Ronald Radd, Jane Merrow, Noel Howlett, Francis Matthews, Richard Leech. Steed, having been miniaturised, finds familiar items taking on hazardous proportions in a Brobdingnagian world set on an ordinary desk top.



6. *They Keep Killing Steed* ('68). d. Robert Fuest. wr. Brian Clemens. w/Linda Thorson, Patrick Newell, Ian Ogilvy, Ray McNally, Norman Jones, Bernard Horsfall. A mad scientist discovers a way of duplicating people and 'creates' four Steeds in order to destroy a peace conference.

Note: An interview with *Avengers* producer/scripter Brian Clemens begins on page 38 of *Starburst* this month.

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As well as unleashing a new horror shocker on the cinema-going public in the form of *Monster* (see page 12), Roger Corman has moved into the area of the space epic. *Battle Beyond the Stars* is a low budget, but expensive-looking, sf version of *The Magnificent Seven*. Report by Anthony Paul.

"I always wanted to make *The Magnificent Seven* in space," Roger Corman.

So what's to stop the man who heads New World Pictures, the largest independent motion-picture distribution company in the United States? Nothing at all now. "But I really didn't feel that the timing was right until *Star Wars* came out and was so enthusiastically received," says Corman "Now my idea doesn't seem quite so bizarre."

That *Battle Beyond the Stars* is another version of *The Magnificent Seven* is probably no more bizarre than the fact that *Magnificent Seven* was a Western version of the Japanese classic *The Seven Samurai*. Now, instead of swords or six-guns, the space-age-seven use ray guns, and the noble horse is the replaced by spaceships.

The peaceful Japanese village that became a peaceful Mexican village is now a peaceful planet called Akir which is threatened with extinction unless it submits to a ruthless conqueror named Sador. He has in his nasty little hands a weapon called a Stellar Converter, which is capable of eliminating Akir completely.

In order to save themselves, the Akira send an emissary named Shad to enlist the aid of intergalactic soldiers of fortune who form an unlikely alliance of aliens for the defense of Akir.

The intergalactic magnificent seven are led by — wait for it — John "Boy" Walton himself, Richard Thomas, as Shad the Akira. His first recruit is a female computer specialist named Nanelia (*Darlane Fluegel*) whose father captures Shad for the purpose of mating him with his daughter. Fortunately (or otherwise, depending how you look upon it), Nanelia rebels against dad and escapes with Shad.

Shad next encounters a cargo hauler under attack by hijackers. Shad rescues the pilot, an oddball called Cowboy (*George Peppard*) who dresses in western gear. Cowboy returns the favour by joining with Shad and contributing his load of weapons and supplies to the cause.

Meanwhile, Nanelia, in her own spaceship, is attacked by a plant-type creature but rescued in the nick of time by a reptilian mercenary, Cayman (*Morgan Woodward*). When Cayman learns that she is joining the Akirian defense against

BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS



the evil conqueror who destroyed Cayman's own planet, the mercenary decides to enlist.

Additional help comes from clones who act as one called Nestor (Earl Boen and John D. Gowsans), Gelt (Robert Vaughn) who is wanted in every part of the galaxy, and the warrior woman from Valkira, St Exmin (Sybil Danning).

When the ruthless Sador, played to the hilt by John Saxon, returns to Akir to discover the inhabitants ready to fight with the aid of their own magnificent seven, he is naturally upset, and a colossal space war begins, both in the air and on the ground, leading to the inevitable showdown between Sador and Shad.

While the obvious connotations of previous cinematic works are evident in *Battle Beyond the Stars*, Richard Thomas sees another analogy. "You might see the situation as a David and Goliath battle within a different framework," he says. "And, without giving the ending away, I think that the implications are consistent; winner takes all."

"I've done the character in a western setting, now I've done it in outer space. Too bad I couldn't have been in *The Seven Samurai* as well" — Robert Vaughn.

Since leaving *The Waltons*, Richard Thomas has fought hard for the kind of roles that will, he hopes, help people to forget he ever trod upon Walton's Mountain green, and to date he hasn't done too badly. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, he helped Germany to lose World War One, and in *Battle Beyond the Stars* he holds his own as successor to Toshiro Mifune and Yul Brynner.

He first heard of the Corman project while it was still in development, and was anxious to read the script by John Saylor who wrote *Piranha*.

"The script has a sense of fun to it," says Thomas, "a balance to offset the drama. It's an imaginative blending of elements, including a romance between Shad and Nanelia which has a sweet innocence to it that colours the film in a way that a basic space adventure or futuristic drama might ignore. I like that part of it because it demands more from me as an actor, giving the part more substance and range."

For Robert Vaughn, the film brings him full circle since twenty years ago he played almost an identical character in *The Magnificent Seven*. "I've done it in the western setting, now I've done it in space," he notes "Too bad I couldn't have been in *The Seven Samurai* as well!"

"Cowboy is a classic character. He has a sense of humour about himself without being negative. He's a very accepting guy." — George Peppard.

He describes his character Gelt as "the consummate mercenary". He is the best at what he does and he is surrounded by unimaginable wealth. Yet he comes to the defence of a planet which cannot pay him, simply because he would like to have a "meal and a place to hide," which is a line from the script.

"I must admit, I was a little nervous about the ray guns. I recall one experience during the filming of *The Man From UNCLE* when I was incorrectly wired for a special effects scene — and the electrical charges shorted out on my chest. But that was the only one accident in about 120 shows, so I can't really complain. Since then I take a little extra care with the wiring diagrams."

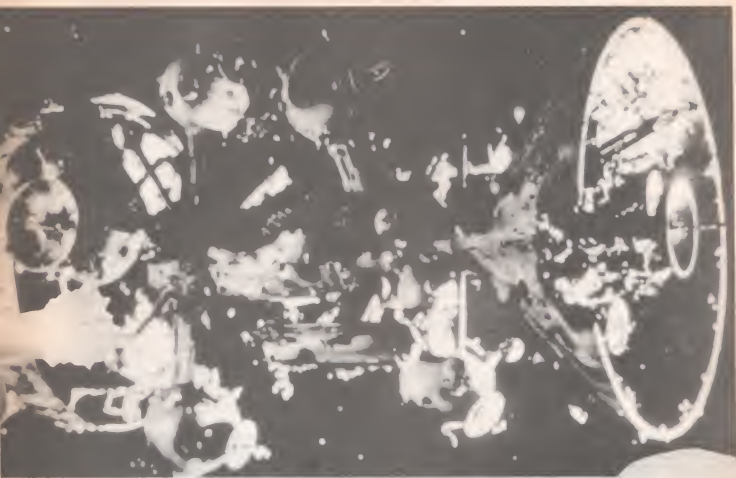
Despite Robert Vaughn's connections with the Western counterpart, the character which has immediate connotations of the cowboys 'n' Mexicans saga is Cowboy, played by Peppard. Cowboy is a traditional reference to the free-spirited loner that audiences have come to recognise as the American ideal — the western hero.

"Cowboy is a classic character," states Peppard. "He has a sense of humour about himself without being negative. He's a



Above left: A mysterious space-suited figure blasts away at an unseen target. Above right: The remarkably detailed model of the Haphaestus station hangs motionless in space. Below left: The evil Sador's ship, Hammerhead. Below right: More strange alien creatures from *Battle Beyond the Stars*.





very accepting guy with a lot of experience in warfare, but he isn't cold or distant. It's the kind of part an actor can have fun with (Peppard taught himself to play harmonica just for the part) while retaining a seriousness that is genuinely believable when the action starts."

Roger Corman is not exactly renowned for giving his directors *carte-blanche* in terms of time and budget, which is perhaps why his films are so successful. He hand-picks the people he knows can bring in a good quality picture on time and on budget. In this case he picked Jimmy T. Murakami, an internationally-acclaimed animator, producer and director of film shorts, documentaries and specials. He previously worked with Corman on Von Richtofen & Brown as the art and serial director.

For this, his first full-length movie, Murakami gave himself the additional challenge of creating a specific visual mood.

"I want the film to have a supernatural comic book approach," he says. "I want it to look bizarre and unusual, but not at the expense of continuity. I love sharp, well-defined lighting techniques and I think audiences can respond more quickly and pleasurably to clarity in film. However, I found myself moving away from realism, like a painter might, and into fantasy. That is the visual style I want to capture."

Part of the pictorial mood was achieved by creating spaceships which reflected the unique personalities of each of the key characters. This task was left in the care of Chuck Comisky, a former production co-ordinator of live action and

miniature photography for Filimation which produced the tv series *Spac Academy*.

"It was a difficult job," says Comisky about his assignment for Corman, "especially considering the time we had to do it in! But we came up with some innovative fantasy-like solutions, with Shad's spaceship being very organic, somewhat antiquated and passive looking, while Sador's craft is definitely sinister and lethal looking. It was a very unconventional approach because we worked without plans or designs."

Comisky also had to come up with some new filming techniques to no doubt meet with time and budget limitations.

"We used two procedures," explains Chuck, "which hadn't really been done together before, in order to relay the feeling of space flight and space war. First of all, we mounted cameras on tracks so that the same shot could be precisely repeated, moving the camera while the model remained in a fixed position. Then we used a bi-pac technique, whereby two reels of film could be exposed at once in the same camera."

"This allows cameramen like Bob and Dennis Skotak and George Dodge to shoot different reels of film at different backgrounds and then overlay the exposed print against raw stock, creating not only movements of the spaceships, but movement of the backgrounds as well."

All clear about that? No! Well, what does it matter so long as the finished product looks good? And knowing Roger Corman, he'll settle for nothing less than spectacular effects to rival *Star Wars* . . . providing it doesn't cost too much!

Below left: Sybil Danning plays St Exmin, a ferocious Valkirian warriorress who pledges to help the Akir battle the evil Sador (John Saxon). Below right: George Peppard plays the free-wheeling adventurer, Cowboy, another who is caught up in the battle against the forces of Sador. Opposite top left: Nanella (Darlene Flugel), a computer and robotics expert, works on a damaged android. Opposite top right: The warlord of Malmori, Sador (John Saxon), is the villain of *Battle Beyond the Stars*. Opposite below: Cayman, the reptile warrior, and Kelvin, the thermal twins, have a little chat with a house guest.





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